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\* Dissertation ; Section VI. Article, Thomas Brown.

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## ON ETHICS, OR MORALS PROPERLY SO CALLED.

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## INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO MORAL SCIENCE, LIMITS AND DIVISION OF THE SUBJECT.

**B**EFORE entering upon any branch of inquiry, it must always be advantageous to ascertain the limits of the subject, and its relation to other departments of human knowledge. And if this be useful in general, it must be so especially in Morals, a science of a singularly elastic nature, which by some has been compressed within narrow bounds, while by others it has been allowed to embrace a very extensive territory. But in order to trace the proper sphere of morals, we must cast a rapid glance over the vast and varied map of the intellectual world.

One of the most ancient divisions of the sciences with which we are acquainted, is that into the Physical, the Practical, and the Logical. The first class was understood to embrace the knowledge of things as they are, without any immediate reference to practice, and to comprehend all purely speculative investigations into the nature and properties, not only of matter, but even of spirit. Here, in short, the end was bare speculative truth. The object of the practical sciences, on the other hand, was to modify the actions of men in the manner most con-

ductive to their happiness. The grand question which they had to resolve was, not what *is*, but what *ought* to be. To the third class, or logic, it belonged to lay down rules for the due cultivation of all the other sciences, and it was properly divided into four parts, which taught how truth, whether speculative or practical, might best be discovered, appreciated, retained, and communicated. The whole of human knowledge was supposed to be comprehended under one or other of these three primary classes.

However specious this ancient classification may appear, we may fairly doubt whether it ever has been, or is likely, in future, to be of much use in practice. It is liable to the fundamental objection of bringing together subjects widely different, and separating those which are nearly allied; for it unites mind and matter under one head, and forcibly divides the speculative from the practical, which are often so closely linked, as by universal consent to form but one science.

Nothing in nature is more opposed than mind and matter. Most of our classes of objects pass by insensible gradations the one into the other, till a point is reached when it is difficult to say where this ends and that begins; but mind and matter, the spiritual and the bodily, are removed from each other by a wide and impassable gulf. Men may doubt as to the nature of the thinking principle, and materialists may maintain that thought is the result of corporeal organization; but no one at all accustomed to reflect on what passes within, can confound thought itself with an extended substance. When we talk of sensation,

reflection, emotion, we talk of that which is constantly present with us, and which, therefore, we know well ; and never could we be brought to believe that matter and its properties have any analogy therewith. Here then, if any where, we may draw a decided line, and separate accordingly the sciences which treat of matter from those which treat of mind.

But the ancient division above explained errs not only in uniting what is dissimilar, but also in separating what is closely connected. The speculative and, the practical, the what *is*, and the what *ought* to be, cannot possibly be a distinction sufficiently marked for the purpose of a primary arrangement, because this distinction naturally occurs, when we descend to the particular sciences. Most of those sciences, for instance, which refer peculiarly to man, consist of two parts, a speculative and a practical. Thus in politics, the question on what *is* government founded, is a purely speculative question ; that, on what *ought* government to be founded is a practical one. Political economy, in like manner, may be divided into two parts, one treating of the causes of the wealth of nations, the other shewing what part government ought to act in modifying these causes. Morals also, as we shall presently see, demand a similar division, and so does natural theology. It is not here maintained, that this distinction has always been attended to by those who have cultivated the sciences just spoken of. But if it has not, the reason is evident. It is because the two parts run so much into each other, that it is often difficult to keep them asunder. For in treating of things as they are, men are naturally led to consider how they



may be improved; and thus the speculative gives birth to the practical. But according to the primary classification, which we are now discussing, each of these sciences, of politics, political economy, morals, and natural theology, which are universally and justly considered as one, must be split into two, and the fractions be arranged under totally different heads of human inquiry. It is impossible that such a violent separation could be really carried through; and therefore the system which requires it must be considered no less useless for application, than erroneous in principle.

The classification of the sciences now most generally adopted, is that into the physical and moral, meaning by physical that relating to matter; by moral, that which respects the mind. Still we sometimes find the word physical used in the sense above alluded to, as synonymous with speculative, and by authors of very high reputation.<sup>1</sup> How little purpose it can serve when thus employed I have already attempted to show, and therefore I shall always take it as synonymous with material. Mind and matter being so essentially different, that they never can be confounded, form the only really philosophical basis on which we can build with safety. The distinction is so natural, that in truth it is always followed in practice; for in all academies and universities, the

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<sup>1</sup> I may instance Dr. Brown, in his well-known Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind; and Sir James Mackintosh, in his valuable Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy, first published in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

sciences of mind and matter are taught in different classes, and by different professors; and rarely do we see the same individuals apply themselves eagerly to both.<sup>2</sup> The term moral being often used in a much more limited sense, and not expressing with sufficient precision the simple idea we wish to convey, we may with advantage substitute the word mental, and divide the sciences accordingly into the mental and the physical, or material.

Still this does not exhaust the subject. In addition to these there is another branch of science which overshadows all the rest, without being incorporated with any of them; maintaining itself, as it were, in a more elevated region, where it serves to protect from injury the tender twigs, and allows them to shoot and swell till they grow to their due proportion. This is logic taken in its most comprehensive sense, the objects of which are so vast and so important, that it may well be considered as occupying the first rank in the scale of human pursuits. Logic undertakes to classify all the objects of knowledge, to assign to each its proper limits, and mark where it touches upon others; to point out new branches of inquiry to the curiosity of mankind; to give rules for the proper cultivation of all the sciences, as well as for each in particular; to show the kind and degree of evidence which each admits of, to explain the different sorts of reasoning,

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<sup>2</sup> The Institute of France, besides its literary academies, contains two separate scientific ones; the Académie des Sciences, i. e. Sciences Physiques; and the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques.

and disclose the various sources of fallacy, whether arising from the nature of man in general, from the peculiarities of classes or individuals, from the vagueness of words and ideas used in daily intercourse, or from false systems of philosophy.<sup>3</sup> Logic also teaches us what is the real object or objects of all philosophy; and in addition to the lofty purposes above enumerated, which regard discovery and judgment, it likewise instructs us in the arts of retaining and communicating truth. Here, it will be allowed, is enough to constitute one leading branch of the sciences, and therefore we may divide them into the Physical, the Mental, and the Logical.<sup>4</sup> The noblest specimen of universal logic which has ever been presented to the world, is to be met with in the two grand works of Bacon—on the Advancement

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<sup>3</sup> The *Idola Tribus*, *Specus*, *Fori*, and *Theatri* of Bacon.

<sup>4</sup> Another classification, which seems to have been but little attended to, is that of Bacon, who divides all philosophy into three parts—*de Numine*, *de Natura*, *de Homine*. It belongs properly to a treatise on logic to discuss at length the merits of this and other classifications; suffice it to observe, that although we consider Bacon's system decidedly superior to the one mentioned in the commencement of this Chapter, the physical, practical, logical, which is adopted by Locke; yet we by no means think it so true to nature as that brought forward in the text. The following objection at once presents itself. Man is composed of mind and body; and although we should grant that his mind were altogether different from that of the brutes, yet his bodily structure is surely very similar, as we know from comparative anatomy. But according to the arrangement of Bacon, the physiology of man would belong to a different leading class from that of animals, which are comprehended under the term *Natura*.

of Learning, and the *Novum Organum*. After these, may be mentioned the third and fourth book of Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*.

Dismissing the physical and the logical sciences, as foreign to our present purpose, let us turn our attention to the mental. These may be properly divided into two principal branches, the pure and the mixed; the former being purely speculative, the latter partly speculative, partly practical. The one is commonly called metaphysics, or the philosophy of the human mind, and has in view two objects: first, to consider the nature of mind or spirit as a substance distinct from matter; secondly, and more particularly, to examine the phenomena or appearances which mind presents, to analyse and classify these, and to discover the general laws according to which they arise and succeed each other. This science, as we see, is in itself purely speculative, though remotely it may lead to most important practical applications.

The second branch of the mental sciences is of a mixed nature, combining practice with speculation, and to this the term moral may well be applied.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> This being the first occasion on which the term *moral* occurs, it may be well to mention the various significations which have been given to the word, and particularly to determine in what sense it is used throughout the present work. No less than four different meanings have been attached to this term. In the first and most extensive sense, it signifies *mental*, and is opposed to *physical*, as when the sciences are divided into the physical and the moral. Secondly, in a less extended sense, it means the active powers of man, or those mental powers which are imme-

It admits of several subdivisions, to be mentioned presently ; but before entering upon these, I shall here take the opportunity of pointing out what may be called a new science, a general doctrine of human happiness. It has been remarked by Bacon,<sup>6</sup> that the partitions of the sciences are not similar to diverse lines, which meet at an angle, but rather to the branches of trees, which are joined in one trunk, this trunk being whole and continuous for a certain space ere it split into branches. Before pursuing

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diately connected with action ; and here it is opposed to the *intellectual*. The assemblage of these active powers is what the French call *caractère*. Thirdly, in a sense still less extensive, it signifies those qualities in which virtue resides, or those connected with duty ; and then it is opposed to vicious.

Lastly, it sometimes means merely one kind of virtues, those comprehended under the general term chastity ; and in this case it is opposed to immoral. A very moral man often implies one who is strict merely in this particular. In the first Book of this inquiry, which treats of Moral Science in general, the word is used in the second sense above mentioned ; and in the following Book, which discourses of Ethics, it is employed in the third and more limited signification. Moral science, then, in the widest sense here given to it, is that which has for its object so to regulate the thoughts, feelings, and actions of men, as to produce the greatest possible sum of human happiness.

Hence thoughts, feelings, and actions are the constant subjects of moral science, and the human mind as the source of thought, feeling, and action. It differs from pure metaphysics in this, that the bare knowledge of the mind, not its regulation, is the object of the latter. Moral qualities differ from the intellectual in this, that the former are immediately connected with the regulation of thought, feeling, and action, and hence with human happiness ; whereas the intellectual are connected immediately with bare knowledge, not with regulation or practice.

<sup>6</sup> De Augm. Scient. lib. iii. cap. 1.

his primary division through all its ramifications, he therefore lays down one universal science as the mother of all the rest, to be considered, in the career of knowledge, as a portion of the common way previous to its separation. This he calls *philosophia prima*, and it is to be made up of axioms not peculiar to any one science, but belonging equally to many.

Following in the steps of this great master, I shall venture to propose a general science of human happiness, or, should we think fit to express it by one word, the term Eudemonology<sup>7</sup> naturally presents itself. In subjects of this nature, however, learned words ought to be avoided as much as possible. This doctrine will comprehend axioms and principles not peculiar to any one of the moral sciences, but applicable alike to many; and if properly founded, will serve as a perpetual guide to conduct us through the intricate maze of each of these sciences in particular. In the First Book of this inquiry an attempt will be made to fix some of the leading principles of this general doctrine; but in the mean time we must pursue our classification, which these observations have interrupted.

The mixed mental, or moral sciences, consider man in two points of view: in the one, they look upon him simply as an individual, or else as belonging to the great family of mankind; in the other, as a member of a civil community. In the former light, he is merely a citizen of the world; in the

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<sup>7</sup> From the Greek *εὐδαιμονία*, happiness.

latter, he is a citizen of a state. Hence a well-marked distinction between the cosmopolite and the civil sciences. To the former belong, 1. Morals, properly so called, or Ethics, which treats of human duty; 2. Natural Theology, which discourses of the being and attributes of Deity, and the duties we owe to him, so far as these can be discovered without the aid of Revelation; 3. Criticism, or the science of taste, inasmuch as it can be reduced to general principles. The civil part, on the other hand, comprehends, 1. Politics, or the science of government; 2. Jurisprudence, or the science of law, civil as well as criminal;<sup>8</sup> 3. Political Economy, or the science of national wealth.

Having marked out the place which properly belongs to morals or ethics in the great body of the sciences, and having seen how it is related to the rest, to some remotely, to others nearly, we must now proceed to consider it more particularly. The object of this branch of philosophy is human duty, and it treats of right and wrong, moral obligation, merit and demerit, virtue and vice. It is especially conversant about certain sentiments of our nature to which the epithet moral has generally been applied, the sentiments of approbation and disapprobation which arise on considering the characters and actions of ourselves and others. There is no subject which more constantly presses itself upon our notice than this. It

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<sup>8</sup> Legislation is, properly speaking, an art, not a science. It applies to practice the principles derived from many sciences, from morals, politics, jurisprudence, and political economy.

follows us in all our intercourse with men, of whatever nature it may be, solemn or gay, serious or frivolous, it attends us in all our readings and meditations where our fellow-creatures are concerned, and when we remove from the busy world, it pursues us into the deepest solitude, and occupies the recesses of the heart. But though morals have in all ages been intimately present to men, though they are constantly thinking and speaking about them, and every day of their lives feel approbation or disapprobation of themselves or others, yet when they come to dive philosophically into the subject, they soon are bewildered and lost. In proof of this we need only instance the numerous and opposite systems of ethics which have appeared from the earliest ages down to our own days. Perhaps the very nearness of the object has prevented it being distinctly perceived ; for as in the world without we know that a certain distance is necessary to render any thing distinct, so it may be in the world within. Certain it is that the subjects which seem most intimately to concern man, are not those with which he has become first acquainted, for eclipses were foretold and the planetary system disclosed before he knew that his blood circulated. Nay, it was long supposed that the arteries contained no blood at all ; and while the nature and motions of the real fluids were undiscovered, others, such as animal spirits, were created by the imagination alone. Even at the present day astronomy is much better understood than physiology ; and while we can measure the distance of the most remote planets and calculate the forces which keep them in their orbits, we



still dispute about the ordinary functions of the human body. The theory of the tides is better understood than that of digestion, and the effects of the moon than the uses of the spleen. The same may be said of mental philosophy. While chemistry is daily enlarging the boundaries of our knowledge, while it analyses the earths and alkalis, and discovers the essential principles of bark, opium, and strychnia, we are still at a loss to analyse our moral sentiments, and doubt about the foundation of morals.

This diversity in theory must strike us as the more extraordinary when we reflect on the general uniformity which has prevailed in practical morality. With some exceptions the same actions have, in all ages, been approved or disapproved by mankind ; and however much philosophers might differ in their reasons, they have generally been found to agree with each other and with the rest of the world in applauding or condemning certain actions and dispositions. Even those, such as Mandeville and Hobbes, whose principles seemed subversive of all morality, still felt and spoke about particular characters much as other people : just as Berkeley and his followers who denied or doubted the existence of matter, acted in every respect as if it really existed.<sup>9</sup> This may serve

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<sup>9</sup> Perhaps Berkeley was the only man who ever pretended to prove the non-existence of matter. This is in truth the peculiarity of his system, and distinguishes it from all others. Hume only said that we had no proof of the existence of matter ; but Berkeley attempted to shew that we had a positive proof to the contrary. See the *Principles of Human Knowledge*, and the beautiful dialogues between Hylas and Philonous. Hume was

to show us that practical morality falls peculiarly within the domain of common sense, an excellent guide in the ordinary business of life, though far from sufficient, as some metaphysicians suppose, to conduct us through the intricate paths of the higher philosophy. Common sense being, as the name implies, that portion of intelligence usually found among men, it follows that its decisions will be pretty uniform, much more so than those of the higher talents which admit of every variety and even eccentricity. This is one cause of the general agreement among mankind with respect to practical morality. But though common sense, or, as some would say, common feeling,<sup>10</sup> be a safe enough guide in general, and pretty constant, it would be absurd to say that it cannot possibly be enlightened or corrected by more profound inquiry. Individuals produced, bought, sold, and grew rich; nations flourished and rose to opulence long before political economy was heard of, but we do not think this a sufficient reason for neglecting the cultivation of that science. Some of the greatest physicians the world ever saw are supposed never to have dissected a human body, and were entirely unacquainted with the circulation of the blood; but shall we therefore say that anatomy is useless, and

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properly a sceptic, not so Berkeley. Matter, according to him, was the grand source of scepticism; and were it once exploded, infidelity and its consequences would for ever flee away.

<sup>10</sup> The reader will observe that these two words are employed in order not to prejudge the question as to the prevalence of reason or of feeling in morals.

that Harvey laboured in vain? Children learn to speak their mother tongue fluently and pretty correctly without ever having heard of grammar, but still this is always considered as essential to a liberal education. Speculation constantly tends to influence practice, though it may be long of actually doing so. Nor perhaps ought we to deplore that it is so tardy in its effects, for were all the crude opinions of philosophers to be at once applied to real life, it is difficult to imagine the mischief that would ensue. Delay is absolutely necessary to try the merits of a system, and if at last it be proved sound, we may be sure that it will have an effect. Nor is this delay less advantageous to philosophers themselves than to society in general; for if they knew that their schemes would be instantly acted upon, their liberty of speculation would be greatly restrained from fear of the immediate consequences. As it is, they feel free to throw out many bold suggestions which in part at least may be correct, well knowing that Time, the sage, will separate the true from the false.<sup>11</sup>

Nor is the uniformity of the moral sentiments of mankind with respect to actions and characters so complete as many have supposed. On certain great points all no doubt are agreed, but on others there has been a considerable diversity, particularly when we compare distant ages and countries. But the moment there is a diversity, we instantly perceive the necessity of a rule whereby to determine which opi-

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<sup>11</sup> This may be pleaded as an excuse for Hume and others whose speculations have given much offence.

nion or practice is best. Even in the same or adjacent countries we often find a wide disagreement in judging of the merits of individuals. This may no doubt arise from some having had more opportunities of knowing the virtues, others the vices of the character in question ; but even where these are a matter of history, and have appeared in the face of day, the estimate concerning them is sometimes very different. Take for instance the character of Napoleon. By the French in general he is regarded not only as a military and civil genius of the first order, but as one whose brilliant and useful achievements cast into the shade all minor faults ; while by many of the English he is looked upon chiefly as a finished conqueror and tyrant. Nay, his conquests themselves are applauded or condemned according as they are talked of on this or that side of the channel ; and in the eyes even of many who blame his ambition, his moral reputation has suffered more from the single murder of the Duc d' Enghien than from the sacrifice of a million of men in Italy, Spain, Germany, and Russia. Surely we must here see the necessity of a standard whereby to try the actions of men, and to discover such a standard is the principal object of ethical science.

By some, the axiom "*de mortuis nil nisi bonum*" has been adopted, while by others, the very circumstance of an individual being no longer alive to feeling, is considered as a reason for canvassing his character more freely. The attempts of Alibeu, and Meunier, and Darmes, against the life of the King of the French, are in general regarded with abhor-

rence ; but by a certain party in France, these men are looked upon as heroes, who exposed themselves to almost certain death to gain a patriotic end. Those who assassinated tyrants were by the ancients held in the highest honour ; and Harmodius, Aristogiton, Brutus, who stabbed his friend, nay, Timoleon, who slew his own brother, were held up as bright examples to the world, and had statues raised to their memory. In this respect, moral sentiment has undergone a great change. The same may be said of suicide, which amongst the Romans was not only tolerated but praised ; while those who in certain circumstances did not put an end to themselves, were branded as miserable poltroons, dead to every manly virtue. Most of the eminent men who were doomed to die by the first Cæsars, anticipated their fate by self-slaughter, and always were applauded for doing so ; and the Emperor Otho is represented by Tacitus as having gained as much reputation by killing himself as he had lost by the murder of Galba.<sup>12</sup> This too was at a time when his affairs were by no means desperate. Moreover the exposure of infants was practised, without remorse or obloquy, both by the Greeks and Romans.

In another branch of morals, that which regards the intercourse between the sexes, we find a very considerable diversity of sentiment, not only between past and present times, but between different nations

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<sup>12</sup> “ Duobus facinoribus, altero flagitiosissimo, altero egregio, tantundem apud posteros meruit bonæ famæ, quantum malæ.” Hist. lib. ii. cap. 4.

of our own day. To say nothing of certain practices now generally execrated, but which were tolerated by the most refined people of antiquity; we may remark that, from the earliest ages polygamy has been permitted in the east, while in Europe it has been generally forbidden. Abraham was married to his half-sister by the father;<sup>13</sup> and at Athens marriages of this sort were legal; but at Sparta, those with an uterine sister only were sanctioned, while in Egypt both were allowed.<sup>14</sup> Even now the marriage of uncle and niece is not uncommon in some catholic countries, particularly in Spain and Portugal, also in Savoy, but in protestant states it is generally, if not always, prohibited. In England a man may not wed a former wife's sister; but in America, such a connection is sanctioned and is by no means rare. These examples may suffice to show that the moral sentiments of mankind have not been quite so uniform as some would have us to believe; and at the same time, they prove that ethics is not a matter so very plain and simple, as to require no rule beyond the common sense or common feeling of the world.

After these observations, which go to prove the necessity of science in morals, it remains to be shown what are its leading divisions. And here again the same distinction presents itself, which we formerly mentioned as applicable to other sciences. Ethics naturally divides itself into two principal parts, the

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<sup>13</sup> Genesis, xx. 12.

<sup>14</sup> See *L'Esprit des Lois*, liv. v. ch. v., and the authorities there quoted; Cornelius Nepos, Philo, Strabo, and Seneca.

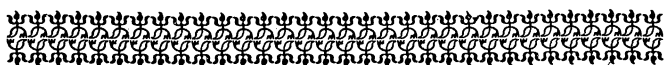
speculative and the practical, or the Theory of moral sentiments, and the Rule of action, or rule of life. This is a distinction of first rate importance, but strange to say it has been very little attended to. Almost all writers upon morals have mixed up the one with the other, and have confounded the two questions, the *what is*, and the *what ought to be*. Having discovered, or thought they had discovered, the nature and origin of our moral sentiments, they conceived they had nothing further to do ; as if, why *do* we approve or disapprove, and why *ought* we to approve or disapprove, were one and the same question. But it is evident that the circumstances actually present to the mind, and which give rise to our moral sentiments, may or may not always be the same as those by which, on mature reflection, we consider ourselves justified in awarding praise or blame. Thus suppose, merely for the sake of illustration, that most of the above sentiments could be traced to associations formed in childhood and early youth, would this be a sufficient reason to give to any one who asked us, why we approved or disapproved such and such actions ? As assigning the actual cause, the answer might be correct enough, and so express a metaphysical truth ; but it would not be a moral answer, that is, it would not shew that we were right in applauding or condemning. Here we see the difference between a metaphysical and a moral reason, or a speculative and a practical, and at the same time the propriety of the distinction above laid down. In saying that it has been scarcely at all attended to by writers on this subject, I must however except Sir James Mackintosh, who, in his Dissertation on the

Progress of Ethical Philosophy, has insisted strongly thereon, and considers that much of the obscurity which involves this subject has arisen from confounding two questions which ought always to have been kept separate. It may be true that actions ought to be called virtuous or vicious according to their general consequences ; but does it therefore follow, that the view of these consequences is always present to the mind when it approves or disapproves ? These it is clear are quite different inquiries. The second part, here termed the Rule of action, is what Sir James calls the Criterion of morality.

The speculative branch of morality naturally subdivides itself into two, in one of which we treat of the *nature* of the moral sentiments, and *analyse* them, supposing them susceptible of analysis ; while in the other we trace the *sources* or *causes* from which they spring, in other words, their *origin*.

Practical morality also admits of a twofold division. The first part investigates the final cause of these moral sentiments, i. e. the purpose for which they seem to have been given us, or the object which they serve ; the second considers on what occasions they *ought* to arise in order to fulfil that purpose, i. e. what is the quality of actions on account of which we are justified in approving or disapproving them, and in calling them virtuous or vicious. In short, this last part treats of the characteristic quality or qualities of Virtue and Vice. Each of these heads must be touched upon in order ; but previously we must endeavour, according to promise, to fix some of the principles of the general science of human happiness.





## BOOK I.

### ON MORAL SCIENCE IN GENERAL, OR THE SCIENCE OF HUMAN HAPPINESS.

#### PART I.

##### PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE HUMAN MIND, AND ON HUMAN HAPPINESS.

SINCE we are constantly forming plans of happiness, and since there is nothing in which we feel so deep an interest, we can readily believe that enquiries into the sources thereof must have attracted the attention of mankind at a very early period. One of the principal objects of the Greek philosophers was to discover wherein lay the *summum bonum*, or chief good, which the wise man ought always to pursue. Various systems were formed, all of them imperfect, but all containing some truth, one placing the chief good in pleasure, another in the mere absence of anxiety ; a third in active virtue, and a fourth in contemplation ; while a fifth denied that there was any fixed good at all, and maintained that every thing depended upon individual opinion or humour. Some philosophers thought they could not be virtuous and happy but apart from the world ; these said that we ought to place our happiness in nothing but what

was in our own power, and inaccessible to the strokes of fortune ; and those, instead of instructing us to master and direct our passions, taught that we should be perpetually guarding against the occasions of them, treating the mind as Sanctorius did his body, who spent his life in guarding it from injury.

But inquiries into human happiness have not been abandoned to philosophers alone. Hints and reflections thereupon are to be met with every where, in prose works having no pretensions to great accuracy, in poems, plays, and even in daily conversation. In modern times, indeed, the subject has generally been considered merely as a popular one, perhaps as beneath the notice of persons of exalted attainments ; and while the appellation of men of science has been awarded to those who studied grubs and butterflies, it has often been denied to such as addicted themselves to morals and politics. But even when these were allowed to be real sciences, it seems mostly to have been overlooked that a higher and more general philosophy reigns over all branches of knowledge which especially relate to the actions of man, whether considered in his individual or in his social capacity.\* Attempts, as we have seen, were made by the ancients towards founding a philosophy of this description, but with no great success. Their systems differed as much among themselves, and were as partial as the opinions met with daily in the world.

And this brings me to remark a difficulty belonging to all moral science, but in a peculiar degree to that comprehensive one now to be treated of, and

which will sufficiently account for the great diversity of opinions here alluded to.

Those who cultivate other branches of human knowledge require a keen intellect, and that alone. The mathematician who reasons of number and quantity ; the natural philosopher who calculates mechanical forces ; the chemist who analyses earths and alkalis, and determines the laws of heat, and of all insensible motion ; the geologist who attempts to discover the causes of the changes already undergone, or now in progress near the earth's surface ; the physiologist who investigates the causes of life and death and the functions of every organ in the body ; even the metaphysician, so far as he studies our intellectual nature alone ; lastly, the natural historian, who examines, describes, and classifies every mineral, vegetable, and animal, all have to do with objects cognizable by the intellect or the senses. Not so the moral philosopher. The grand end which he has in view is happiness, and happiness to be known must be *felt*. If it be allowed that no description could possibly give to a man born blind or deaf any clear notion of colours or of sounds, it must equally be true that no one could form any idea of an emotion which he had never at all felt. How should we proceed to give such an one a conception of beauty or sublimity, of love, hatred, or ambition ? In vain should we heap words upon words till we had exhausted all the riches of language, for his mind would remain as before, dead to all notions of the sort. The only way in which we could succeed in opening the avenues of his heart would be to bring him to a spot commanding a

beautiful prospect, or place him in situations fit to call forth the passions. If still he should prove insensible, we would give up the case as hopeless. We should consider him as a moral anomaly cut off by natural deficiency, not only from the principal sources of enjoyment, but from the means of acquiring knowledge. He might, indeed, pursue one or other of the sciences above enumerated, and even attain to eminence, supposing the passion of curiosity not to be extinct with the rest; but were he to attempt moral subjects, he would instantly appear wanting in the first elements of success. He might often have read of love and ambition, and might even write down the words on his pages, but it is clear he could know nothing about them. By carefully attending to what others had said, he might be able to conceal his ignorance, and so compose a plausible book, but it could not add a tittle to the sum of information we before possessed. Now what is true of a person such as we have here imagined must apply in a less degree to many individuals in the world. Some have intellects of a high order, and yet are very deficient in sensibility or delicacy of feeling; so that when they come to reason on human happiness, they are sure to form some very partial system at best, if it be not quite erroneous. Here their intellect stands them in no stead from the want of data to go upon. Not being able to conceive what they have never felt, they are ignorant of all sorts of felicity except a few, and to these, therefore, they turn their attention, neglecting all the rest. Of this we have a very remarkable instance in Hobbes, a man of the highest order of

intellect, but who from want of sensibility composed a false and narrow system of morals. The same observation, though in a very modified degree, is applicable to one of the greatest philosophers of our day, Jeremy Bentham. It would be the utmost injustice to compare his moral writings with those of Hobbes; but it is nevertheless certain, that they often evince a want of knowledge of the human heart, and take a confined estimate of the various sources of enjoyment open to mankind. One who could consider poetry and the fine arts as no more useful than the game of solitaire or tee-totum, must be allowed to have been deficient in that comprehensive sensibility so necessary in moral science. Nor are intellect and delicacy of feeling alone sufficient. A man may be capable of feeling, and may have actually felt to a certain extent every emotion of which human nature is susceptible, but it is impossible that he can have experienced them all in great intensity. It is necessary, however, that he should be able to conceive them existing in every possible degree of force, otherwise his estimate of their influence on action and happiness will be imperfect. Now imagination alone can disclose this new world to his view, and can magnify passions weak in himself, till they rise before him in all their strength and majesty. Herein lies the art of all great dramatic writers and actors. Obedient to the call of fancy, the gates of the mind fly wide open before them, and allow them to see the inmost recesses of the heart. They do not reason about the passions, but they can imagine what they are, and know practically, though not theoretically, on what occasions

they are apt to be called forth. So ought the moral philosopher.

Here then is the grand difficulty of this branch of knowledge. It requires a combination of qualities very rarely to be met with, Intellect, Sensibility, Imagination, all in a high degree. If we cannot be surprised that monks and schoolmen who passed their lives in cloisters should have had very narrow notions on the subject, removed, as they were, from the busy world, from the society of women, and from all domestic ties and endearments, we must allow that those philosophers who spend most of their time in their closets, who lead either a solitary existence, or one confined to a few intimates, and whose social affections have been little cultivated, are on these accounts peculiarly unfitted for laying down plans of human happiness. How can any one give comprehensive views of happiness, without a mind so framed as to feel enjoyments of different kinds, and imagine them stronger or weaker in others? Could he who was dead to the pleasures of the affection and the imagination form any just estimate of their importance? This is evidently impossible.

The same difference of feeling and dulness of imagination in men explain what has often been observed, that one half of mankind pass their lives in wondering at the pursuits of the other. Not being able either to feel or to fancy the pleasure derived from other sources than their own, they consider the rest of the world as little better than fools, who follow empty baubles. They hug themselves as the only wise, while in truth they are only narrow-minded.

The above observations will show, that what we ought most carefully to avoid in all inquiries of this nature, is the formation of an exclusive system, which would confine happiness to one or two points alone, forgetful of the infinite diversity of pursuits and enjoyments, which the bounty of the Deity has opened up to his creatures. At the same time were we to attempt to enumerate all the objects and all the modes of existence capable of giving pleasure, we should lose ourselves in interminable details, without obtaining any clew to guide us through the labyrinth of life. Here, as in all the higher branches of philosophy, the grand object is to discover certain general principles that widely pervade nature, which are always found united with other things, but which alone communicate real virtue to the compound. If these were all known, science would be complete; for as Bacon has well observed, “Bene scire esse per causas scire;” and these principles are the essential causes of whatever effects we behold. In the language of that great philosopher, they are called *forms*, and they differ from what he styles the *efficient* or palpable cause in this, that the latter is only a *vehicle* for the former. An example or two taken from chemistry will render this very plain. The substances opium and bark had long been employed in medicine to produce narcotic effects and to cure ague, but it was not discovered till lately by analysis, that all the virtue of the one resides in a very minute part of the whole, called morphea, and that of the other in quinine. These being taken away, the rest is an inert mass of no use whatsoever. Here then

we have the essential principles or *forms*, the real causes of certain medicinal effects, separated from the woody and extraneous matter which served merely as a *vehicle* for those forms. If a dose of opium be given, and the usual result ensue, we naturally say that opium was the cause, and in a certain sense we are right, for at least, it contains the cause, as a spoonful of jelly does a nauseous but active powder. The opium, in the language of Bacon, is the *causa efficiens* or *vehiculum formæ*, the morphea the *forma*; or if we please, the one is the *palpable*, the other the *hidden* and *real* cause. This, it is hoped, will suffice to explain the difference between the two. It is just possible that a further analysis may detect morphea not in opium only, but in every plant having a narcotic effect, and if so, we shall have discovered a general narcotic principle widely spread throughout nature. The number of elements is of course very much less numerous than that of compounds, for the latter are formed by the former mixed in proportions infinitely diversified. The number of simple substances known at present to exist does not exceed forty or fifty; and almost all the varieties of vegetable productions are formed out of three of these elements, and all the animal out of four.<sup>1</sup>

From what has now been said, the reader will be able to see more clearly what is meant by the essential principles of happiness. They are hidden causes

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<sup>1</sup> Carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, and azote. The last exists very sparingly in vegetables, and in very many not at all.



or elements, perhaps not very numerous, which pervade all objects, incidents, and pursuits capable of touching our sensibility, and on these elements the efficacy of the compounds depends. Were they once discovered even in part, the science would rest on a real and solid foundation, capable of being enlarged from time to time, but without the destruction of what had before been laid. To endeavour to fix some of these principles is the object of the present book.

In the first place it is necessary to form a correct idea of the nature of those feelings in which all happiness consists. For this purpose we must take a summary view of the various mental phenomena or appearances.<sup>2</sup>

All the states of mind of which we are conscious may be divided into two great classes, according as they are, or are not immediately preceded by a change in the state of the body. To the former the term Sensations is properly applied; for the latter, in the want of a single and appropriate word, the expression Inward phenomena may be adopted. Sensations may be otherwise called, for the sake of uniformity, Outward phenomena. But we must always remember that they are called outward solely in reference to the cause, or change in state of the body, and that they as much belong to the mind within as the inward phenomena themselves. Sensation is as much mental as thought or emotion, though the cause from which it springs is

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<sup>2</sup> The readers of Dr. Brown will perceive that the present classification of the mental phenomena differs not from the one laid down in the lectures of that eminent metaphysician.

not so. This ought never to be forgotten. When the rays of light strike upon the eye, they produce a certain change in the expansion of the optic nerve, called the retina, which is immediately and instantly followed by a change in the mind. We are then said to see, and sight is a sensation. So when the air is put in motion by some material body, and the vibrations of the atmosphere, at last, reach the ear, they make an impression on the auditory nerve, and hearing is the instant consequence. The same holds true of what has sometimes been called internal sensation, arising from some change in the inward parts of the frame. A certain change in the state of the stomach and throat creates hunger and thirst, and the various and obscure changes which occur in disease, produce sensations of a very unpleasant nature. Perfect health, on the contrary, produces a permanently agreeable sensation, though not of a very lively character.

The inward phenomena are separated from sensation by this well-marked distinction, that they are always preceded immediately not by a change in the body, but by some change in the mind, whether a sensation or another inward phenomenon. They are of two sorts, according as they do or do not necessarily involve pleasure or pain, happiness or misery. By the late Dr. Brown of Edinburgh the latter of these were called the intellectual states of mind; but as this phrase is somewhat long for ordinary use, I shall employ the common word Thoughts to express what is here meant. The Emotions constitute the second class of inward phenomena. Thoughts differ from

emotions in this, that they are in themselves neutral as respects sensibility, though they may, and constantly do give rise to pleasurable and painful, exciting and lowering feelings. But these feelings can always be distinguished from the thoughts from which they sprang, and they are properly known by the term emotions, the most comprehensive that our language affords to express those states of mind other than sensations which delight or grieve, rouse or depress, agitate inwardly, and impel us to outward actions. To attempt to explain them any more in words, would be useless, for he who knows them not by feeling never can by description.

Thoughts are of two kinds, simple and relative, or Conceptions and Relations. When I think of a single tree, I have a conception of it; but when I consider two trees together, and am sensible that one is thicker than the other, I am impressed with a relation between them, which in this case is one of comparison. This may be enough for our present purpose; for to pursue the subject further, belongs to a work on metaphysics.

From the above it follows that happiness or misery, pleasure or pain, consists in sensation and emotion, and in these alone. However small, or however great, however fleeting, or however durable pleasures or pains may be, they must all be classed under one or other of these general heads. Here then already we see a little order breaking through the apparent chaos of the human mind.

Paley indeed has maintained the singular opinion that happiness consists not at all in sensation. Such

an opinion, if broached by the spiritual Malebranche, would have surprised us less ; but coming from an author who has gone so far as to say that he knows no difference between pleasures, except in their continuance and intensity, and that the refined, the delicate, and the gross, are otherwise quite on a par ; it must strike us as very extraordinary. Even the words in which he expresses his views are utterly contradictory. “Happiness,” he says, “does not consist in the pleasures of sense, in whatever profusion or variety they be enjoyed.” Here it is allowed that there are pleasures of sense, and if so, they must form a *part* of happiness. Depreciate, vilify, and revile them as much as you please, still you must allow them to be something, and something always bears an infinite proportion to nothing. But the opinion will appear still more unaccountable when we reflect, that Paley comprehends under the pleasures of sense not only sensations properly so called, but various more refined pleasures, as “music, painting, architecture, gardening, splendid shows, theatric exhibitions ; and the pleasures lastly of active sports, as of hunting, shooting, fishing,” &c. Here is a sweeping deduction, indeed, from the elements of human happiness. It is unnecessary to enter upon the arguments by which he attempts to support his views, for even if correct, they prove not that the above pleasures are worthless, but only that they are inferior to others. That this is the case of most of them I shall not pretend to dispute. He says that they continue but a little while at a time ; still they do continue *some* time, and this is enough for our

present purpose. Nor is it true of all of them, that they are so short-lived, not even of sensations, in the strict sense of the word. That general feeling of enjoyment which arises directly from a sound state of body, the sensation of comfort produced by fine weather, or by a good fire, are of a very durable nature. Much of the pleasure of indolent and uneducated people in southern countries arises merely from the bodily luxury produced by a fine climate. And however much we may pity those persons, who from dulness of mind, whether natural or acquired, have little or no relish for any thing beyond a good dinner and a bottle of wine, still, as they do enjoy them, we surely would not wish to deprive them of all they have. "Laying aside the preparation and the expectation, and computing strictly the actual sensation, we shall be surprised to find how inconsiderable a portion of our time they occupy, how few hours in the four-and-twenty they are able to fill up." But if they do create preparation and expectation, or in other words, a flow of thought and emotion, they do a great deal, however insignificant the end may be. Of those who are neither young, nor have any fixed employment, not a few, I believe, spend a good part of the forenoon in planning the feast, and expecting the hour of dinner, and thus the mind is amused and the demon ennui put to flight. Besides, the objection of Paley applies not to sensations only, but to many other enjoyments which, in themselves but transitory, are valuable as objects of pursuit.

As to the other pleasures above enumerated, especially field sports, these have a very great influence

on the happiness of certain classes of men, and are so far from fleeting, that they occupy no small part of life, and are pursued with eagerness even to old age. How many country gentlemen are kept in good health and spirits by the activity mental and bodily to which they give rise!

To complete the inconsistency of Paley, he finishes by saying, that "these pleasures, after all, have their value; and as the young are always too eager in the pursuit of them, the old are sometimes too remiss, that is, too studious of their ease to be at the pains for them which they really deserve." After this we need say no more, only we may observe that the rest of the chapter is valuable, though the author, as he is wont, contents himself with a broad common sense view of the question, and makes no attempt at deep or subtle investigation.<sup>3</sup>

Having thus established the point that sensation must always be considered as an element of human happiness, it must nevertheless be allowed, that by far the greater part is included in the class of emotions. It belongs not to a work of this sort to examine these in detail. They form one principal branch of metaphysics, or the philosophy of the human mind, which undertakes to analyse, to classify them, and to trace the general causes in which they originate. Every science has some point where it joins on to other and contiguous sciences. Thus sensation marks the line where physiology and mental philosophy meet, for

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<sup>3</sup> See Paley's Moral and Political Philosophy. Ch. on Happiness.

the cause being bodily, belongs to the one, and the effect being spiritual, to the other. So the emotions lie on the line of separation between the purely mental and the mixed or moral sciences ; and viewed in one light they belong to the former, in another to the latter. When examined merely in a speculative way, as an object of curiosity, they form a branch of metaphysics ; but when they are considered as elements of human happiness, capable of being fostered, stifled, or directed with a view to the good of individuals or communities, they appertain to moral science. To analyse, classify, and trace their causes belongs to the one ; to show what effects they have upon our happiness, how these effects may be modified, and how the emotions tend to support or overthrow any practical system, is peculiar to the other. Dismissing, then, the general analysis and classification of these feelings as belonging to another department, and amply sufficient to fill a separate work,<sup>4</sup> we shall confine our attention to one great branch of them, by far the most important for our present purpose, Desires and Fears.

A practical acquaintance with the emotions, especially with desires and fears, with the occasions on which they are apt to arise, and the consequences, whether in word or deed, which they usually produce, constitutes what is commonly called a knowledge of human nature. This knowledge is indispensable not

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<sup>4</sup> Those who are inclined to see this branch of philosophy treated at length, and with great acuteness, will do well to consult the third volume of Dr. Brown's Lectures, perhaps the most interesting of the whole work.

only in proposing schemes for bettering the condition of mankind, but more or less in almost every branch of literature, whether history, novels, poetry, or the drama. Without it no moralist, legislator, or statesman, no writer in prose or verse has ever risen to much eminence.

Desire and passion differ only in this, that the former is the most general term, whereas the word passion is limited to desires, either intense or durable. A desire, however transitory, if it be intense, is called passion; as for instance, momentary anger; and perhaps the same word would be applied to a very durable desire, though it never rose to a height. But as this is a case of rather rare occurrence, since desires seldom continue long without waxing powerful, we cannot so well say whether in common language continuance alone would be enough to justify the term. This, however, is of little consequence, for all I wish to observe is, that between desire and passion there is no essential difference, and that the one may at any time grow or decline into the other, the nature of the feeling being all the while the same. Love of money, for instance, may in this man be a light desire, and may never greatly increase, while in that it is the mainspring of life, which, as he advances in years, becomes the passion of avarice, and engrosses his whole existence. This being understood, we may now proceed to consider what more real difference exists in the nature of our various desires.

Desire and fear are utterly opposed to each other, and yet the same objects give rise to both. If we desire to obtain any thing, we may also fear lest we



should not obtain it; and when we actually possess and wish to preserve it, we are apt to fear that we shall not. So when we fear any evil, we necessarily desire to escape it, and when it does overtake us, we again wish for its departure. Thus the two emotions are produced by the same objects, come and go together, and both look to the future. For this reason they have properly been called prospective. They are both simple feelings, not susceptible of analysis, either in language or in idea; and therefore they cannot be defined.

From the above it follows, that whatever real distinction may be found between our desires, the same must exist between our fears; and therefore that the classification which applies to the one will also hold good of the other. Moreover, it is evident, that just as much as desires are favourable, must the corresponding fears be unfavourable to happiness, supposing them equally intense and continuous; and therefore whatever may be proved true of the former, the converse must apply to the latter. Consequently, we are freed from the necessity of discussing both, for we could only repeat our observations.

Every thing in nature may be considered in two points of view, first, as it is something in itself; secondly, as it is related to a greater whole of which it forms a part. The globe we inhabit has a real existence by itself, while at the same time it is a part of the universe, and of our planetary system more especially, to which it is related in the way both of cause and effect. The eastern hemisphere was occupied by races of men, who lived and flourished

long before they heard of the western ; but the old world was not tardy in forming relations with the new when this was once discovered. Every country has a real importance of its own, as well as in reference to others, whether we view it in a geographical, a political, or a moral light ; and so has every province, parish, family, and individual. The moral duties have generally been divided into those which regard self and those which look to others ; and in politics and political economy, home and foreign affairs, home and foreign trade are always kept distinct. This real and fundamental distinction is also met with in the human mind. The great Author of our being has implanted in us two orders of desires very different in their nature. By the one, we are directly impelled to seek the good of self, by the other, that of the world without. Those are properly Self-regarding, these are Social. Without the former man would be a fool, without the latter a savage ; take away the first, and the human race expires ; extirpate the second, and it is scarcely worth preserving. But besides the desires which directly seek the good of others, there are some which point to their evil ; and these also may be called social, the term being employed to signify what relates to the world without, whether for good or for ill. Thus of the two grand classes of desires, the self-regarding and the social, the latter is subdivided into the benevolent and the malevolent. The former class, it is evident, admits of no such general subdivision, for we cannot be conceived as wishing our own injury ; and therefore, the particular desires alone remain here to be enumerated.

This distinction appears so obvious when once pointed out, it admits of such convincing proof from direct experience, and is so agreeable to the general analogy of nature, that we are almost at a loss to conceive how it ever could have been called in question. Still, authors have not been wanting who have denied the reality of the social, or at least of the benevolent desires, and have attempted to prove that man looks only to self. This is but one instance of that tendency to excessive simplification, which in the figurative language of Bacon, is one of the general *idols* of the human mind. No more acceptable incense could be offered to this deceitful divinity, than that which arose from the ruins of the altar of benevolence. It had always been observed, that self over-ruled a great part of our emotions, but how great would be the glory of him who should prove that it governed alone !

It will not be difficult to prove that the distinction we have pointed out is really founded in nature, even on the supposition that all our desires originate in a regard to self. Those who maintain this last opinion must, at all events, admit that there is a decided difference between direct and reflected pleasure, between that which arises immediately from the presence or prospect of any object, and that which we feel, *because* pleasure has first been felt by others. That we do often rejoice on account of the happiness of others, and are grieved on account of their misery, is a fact which falls within the experience of all men, and to this experience we may boldly make an appeal, and rely upon it as impli-

citly as in proving the laws of motion. It is also indisputable, that we often desire the happiness of others and occasionally their woe, and we call the fact indisputable, because we think it established chiefly by what every man experiences in his own breast; likewise by observations on the words and deeds of other men, whether known by personal observation or by testimony. True, it has been maintained, that in desiring the welfare of our fellows, we really look to our own, and that the pleasure anticipated from sympathy creates the motive to charitable deeds. In this view of the case, we still wish for the good of our neighbour, but only as the *means* to an end, that end being self-gratification. Even here it is allowed, that we have benevolent desires, and this is sufficient for our present purpose. This being granted, it may be a matter of curiosity whether self-interest lie at the bottom of all, or whether it do not, and as such the question properly belongs to purely mental philosophy, but having no perceptible influence on practice, it is excluded from moral science.<sup>5</sup>

Being once thoroughly convinced of the truth of the distinction between the self-regarding and the social desires, and the reality of the pleasures of sym-

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<sup>5</sup> Dr. Brown puts the purely disinterested theory in the most startling point of view, when he says, "We desire the happiness of others, and we have pleasure in this desire; but with the same capacity of mere love as now, we should have desired the happiness of others, though no direct pleasure to ourselves had followed our generous wish." Lectures, vol. iii, lect. lxvi. "With the same capacity of love as now!" this is indeed a strange supposition! How can we conceive such a capacity co-existing with

pathy, it follows that all systems of happiness which make no account of these last, must be considered as radically deficient. They at once cut off a grand source of human enjoyment, and leave us as maimed in mind as if we were deprived of sight or hearing. What should we think of a treatise on the senses, which should omit all mention of the eye? And shall a system of moral philosophy be considered perfect, which excludes our social feelings, the boast and brightest ornament of our nature?

Here, then, is a fundamental point never to be lost sight of. He who pursues, exclusively, his self-regarding interest, acts like the man who should cut off one healthy limb, with a view to increase the other. If more blood and nourishment should really fall to its share, would this be a sufficient compensation for the member which he had lost? We may concentrate all our thoughts in what concerns our self, we may never lose an opportunity of pushing what we call our interest; we may be long-sighted and dispassionate, and yet be far from the greatest happiness of which our nature is susceptible. Laughing at the benevolent folly which would make us forget our end, were it but for a moment, we may think ourselves supremely wise, while in truth we are lamentably ignorant. In laying our plans of enjoyment, we have

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the absence of all pleasure of sympathy? One is even at a loss to understand the meaning of the terms, so contradictory do they appear. I may observe once for all, that Brown, admirable as a pure metaphysician, sinks at once when he approaches the subject of morals. This remark on Brown has been made also by Dr. Chalmers, in his very interesting work, "Sketches of Moral and Mental Philosophy."

omitted some of the principal data, and therefore, it cannot be surprising if the result should prove a failure. In vain should we hope to obtain the greatest happiness by denying the first principles of our nature. God has given us propensities and corresponding gratifications of two very different kinds ; and if by an over devotion to self we become dead to the social feelings, we abandon, of our own free will, some of the choicest blessings of His providence. When, therefore, the cares of life begin to engross our soul, when the more generous sentiments of youth wax cold by contact with the world, let us repair to the temple of Divine philosophy, and consult her hallowed voice. She will tell us, that in seeking for bliss, we must enlarge not contract our minds, and keep them open to reflected, as well as to direct felicity. Before quitting the threshold she will show us the altar of benevolence, rising beside her own, and will tell us to snatch from it a brand to nurse the sacred glow.

In that invaluable part of the “*De Augmentis*,” where Bacon touches upon moral science, he lays particular stress upon what he calls the *Bonum Communis*, or social good, considered as a source of happiness to the individual who pursues it ; and he shows, by a reference to various systems of antiquity, that here lay their radical deficiency ; for those systems placed happiness in the *bonum suitatis* only, or in that of which self is the direct object. This consideration alone is sufficient to determine the merits of many highly venerated schemes, which have been handed down to posterity under imposing names, to

some of which I have alluded in the opening of the present chapter. They agreed in this alone, that they were based upon a narrow view of human nature, some attending more to one class of phenomena, some to another, while the importance of the social feelings was properly estimated by none. The stoics, in some respects, approached most nearly to the truth; but their system was disfigured by the most shocking paradoxes, such as the denying of all outward advantages, and of pain as a real evil. Still to them belongs the merit of having estimated the social good much more justly than the rest. It was reserved for the Christian religion to raise the common good to its highest pitch, by enjoining us to love our neighbour as ourselves, a precept which philosophy shows to be equally favourable to both. Charity, like Mercy, is twice blessed, "it blesseth him that gives, and him that takes."



## PART II.

### ON DESIRE AND PASSION.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### *On Desire in General.*

HAVING, by these general considerations, in some degree prepared the way for what is to follow, and, as it is hoped, already thrown a little light upon our path, we may proceed with greater security to inquire further into the essential elements of human happiness.

I. The first element to be mentioned is the existence of one or two strong and permanent desires for some object or objects. This is an element of the utmost importance. Two very different systems of life may be conceived and acted upon ; in the one, a perpetual succession of little wishes is attempted to be kept up ; in the other, one or two prominent and durable desires pervade our whole existence. Assuredly we ought to prefer this latter regulation of the mind. One or two strong desires give that zest to every thing in life, which nothing else can supply. They are not only eminently delightful in themselves, at least if well chosen, but they throw a charm round all other things by effectually expelling the *tædium vitæ*. They constitute a *perpetual emotion* generally



of an agreeable kind, and though, like every thing in life, sometimes accompanied with pains, they drive off the perpetually recurring pain of listlessness or ennui, which seldom fails to wait upon those who have no prominent desire. And true wisdom tells us, that it is better to endure some acute suffering of short duration, than a smaller uneasiness of much longer continuance. If then the system we are considering succeed in expelling ennui, it secures at least one immense advantage, for it puts to flight one of the most formidable foes to human happiness. In avoiding Scylla we may run, no doubt, into Charybdis, for such are anxiety and ennui in the voyage of life. But to be sure of steering clear of the latter is at least one certain good ; and being at ease on this quarter, we can bend all our efforts to the other.

When the mind is under the empire of some strong desire, it can never be vacant of emotion, or of thought, and so left a prey to ennui, for if not engaged with the subordinate desires and the trains of thought to which they give rise, the main-spring itself enters to fill it up. But in the opposite case there will assuredly be frequent intervals between the satisfaction of one wish, and the finding out of some object for another, and in these intervals steps in our languid but wakeful foe. Nay, before one pursuit is fairly at an end the mind often feels a foretaste of its coming languor, and is trying to discover something else to occupy the vacant hour. Thus life is spent in a succession of petty desires and gratifications, alternating with positive suffering, a state as little enviable as can well be imagined. Among those who have no fixed

occupation, how many pass their days in solving two important questions! If they be in town, where the evening is chiefly looked to for amusement, the question is, what shall we do to-night? if in the country, where the morning affords most interest, the inquiry becomes, what shall we do to-morrow? In Paris, the *qu'est ce que nous ferons ce soir* is a problem perpetually solved, and yet for ever recurring; in the country, the *qu'est ce que nous ferons demain* is again and again discussed.

Let any man examine his past life, and say whether he was happier when moved by some vast desire, or when, on the contrary, he was always on the watch for fresh interests and feelings to succeed in perpetual flow. I am confident that his answer will be in favour of the former period, particularly if the *kind* of desire were well chosen; for assuredly all are not equally conducive to happiness. Any, however, is better than none; or if there be an exception, it is in the case of the malevolent affections.

If a man have once been fairly in love, does he not look back upon that period as the most delightful in his existence? Can there be a stronger proof of the pleasure attending a strong desire?

The principle here insisted upon will serve to settle the oft debated question as to the comparative happiness of the married and the unmarried state. If a man be completely taken up with some grand desire of the self-regarding class, but more especially if he be engrossed by general benevolence, and have thus an object for his social affections, he may do without particular attachments: otherwise,

he will feel a want, the want of something to love. But as there are few so occupied by an interest of the first kind as to exclude all wish for social delights, and as there are probably still fewer who can be altogether absorbed by general benevolence, it follows with the strongest evidence that particular attachments are necessary to the great bulk of mankind.

And this explains why it so often happens that men who live at home, say with their mothers and sisters, are less anxious about marriage, or even never think of it until they lose their relations. Having fit objects for loving, they feel not a want beyond. For the same reason a very strong friendship between persons not at all related may serve to prevent either from marrying, though instances of such friendships are rare. Separate the friends, remove the son or brother from his family, and then he will look out for a wife.

The attachment of a man to a woman, and of both to their children, are, after those, the only particular ties that can be formed. Thus the necessity of marriage to the happiness of the great majority of mankind seems to be established.

If, then, the habits of one nation be more domestic than those of another, if private morals be more pure, there is so far a strong presumption in favour of the superior happiness of the former.

A question of considerable interest here presents itself. Does the formation of particular attachments tend to increase or diminish general benevolence?

I am inclined to believe that particular attach-

ments encourage general benevolence to a certain extent, but prevent it from becoming so fervent, as it may sometimes be found in persons who have no such ties. And I am led to this conclusion by reflecting on the following principles: first, that of occupation, to be afterwards dwelt upon; secondly, the principle that one emotion tends to suggest and encourage another of a similar kind. The principle of occupation leads us to conclude that, if a man's affections be much taken up with individuals, they *cannot* be engrossed with the love of mankind in general; while the other principle would persuade us that love of one or a few may open many a heart to feelings of universal love, at least to a certain extent. The warmth of the private attachment may kindle the general fire, which otherwise might have smouldered for ever.

This conclusion, moreover, seems to be supported by experience. It is not without reason that the world has a certain dislike to old maids and bachelors. Are they not more frequently than others of a sour and crabbed disposition, cold, ungenial, and devoid of affection for any one? This is particularly the case with old bachelors; for woman being naturally of a more loving nature than man, she often takes to her bosom some niece or other relation when she has neither husband nor children of her own.<sup>1</sup>

After all, it is by no means contended that desires

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<sup>1</sup> One possible effect of private ties, similar to the first effect above stated, is thus alluded to by Tasso in accounting for the timid counsels of Orcanus:—

cannot be too strong; for what may not err by excess? Happiness seems to depend very much upon a due proportion or equilibrium between our desires and intellectual faculties. Now happiness is of two kinds, happiness of tranquillity, and that of activity; and opposed to these, are the pains of ennui and those of anxiety.

When desires are not strong enough in proportion to our intellectual faculties, it is clear that we are cut off from many active pleasures which those faculties fit us to obtain. But this is not all; for it is precisely this state of mind which engenders the pains of Ennui. Having more than once alluded to this grand enemy of human happiness, I shall now take the opportunity of saying a few words concerning it.

The proper idea of ennui is that of a feeling which occupies the mind when it has nothing else to engage it, since in our waking hours it cannot be altogether vacant. To keep off this uneasiness, it signifies not what may fill the mind, whether pleasurable or painful sensations or emotions, or else a succession of thoughts of a neutral character. Anything, in short, may serve the purpose, provided it keep us employed; for we find that persons who perform even the most mechanical drudgery do not

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Orcano, uom d'alta nobiltà famosa  
 E più nell' arme d'alcun pregio avanti;  
 Ma or, congiunto a giovinetta sposa,  
 E lieto omai de' figli, era invilito  
 Negli affetti di padre e di marito.

*Gerusalemme Liberata.* Canto x. st. 39.

suffer from this malady. It is difficult to conceive any pleasurable or painful emotion as arising from certain occupations which are ever the same, such as cotton-spinning, when labour is much divided, stone-cutting and sawing, coal-heaving, pin-making, and innumerable others; the business of under-clerks in banking houses, of copyists, &c.; but yet these occupations drive away mental languor. I make this remark for the purpose of showing that pleasure or pain is not necessary for expelling ennui, as has sometimes been asserted, but that thought alone will suffice. The feeling in question seems to be of a simple nature, and admits of no analysis.<sup>2</sup>

When we look abroad and observe what are the characters most liable to this evil, we shall find that they are precisely those who with considerable intellectual faculties, or at least not inferior to the ordi-

<sup>2</sup> The word ennui, though derived from the French, is used in that language in a much more extensive sense than in ours. With us it means but one thing, namely, that languid, uneasy feeling which arises from the want of any other emotion or occupation; but with the French it may mean any annoyance, or even grief. Thus, in Corneille's play of *Les Horaces*, Camille, when labouring under the deepest anguish on account of the approaching combat between her brother and her lover, says to Sabine, in reference to the "bonne nouvelle" of delay,

"Je pense la savoir s'il faut la nommer telle;  
On l'a dite à mon père, et j'étais avec lui;  
Mais je n'en conçois rien qui flatte mon ennui."

Acte iii.

Melancholy is sometimes confounded with ennui properly so called, but they are very different. The French are perhaps as much liable to the latter as we are, though not to the former.

nary, possess but weak desires. Diminish the faculties or increase the desires, and in both cases ennui will abate. Whatever the circumstance may be on which the lowness of the faculties depends, whether natural conformation, want of education, or a long course of mental inactivity, age, or temporary causes, such as illness, drinking, and opium eating, the consequence is always the same. Observe very old men, whose faculties have become impaired, they can sit doing nothing nearly all day long, and yet without ennui. The same more or less holds true of savages and half-savages, such as the Esquimaux, who spend many months of the year shut up in snow houses without any occupation, and still appear cheerful; the Lazzaroni of Naples, who lie down in the shade for hours together; and many of the poorer Irish who may be often seen standing and looking over the country in an indolent state of mind equally void of pleasure and of pain. It has frequently been remarked of negroes, whose intellects are of an inferior order, that if not forced to work they will rather lie all day in the sun than exert themselves in any way, so that we cannot suppose them to feel any painful mental lassitude. In like manner persons in illness which depresses the faculties lie in bed perfectly idle, without suffering from vacuity of mind; but no sooner does the illness subside and the faculties return, than the want of occupation is again felt. Wine or spirits, tobacco and opium, produce the same effect for a short time. At first they exhilarate, but afterwards they bring on a calmness of mind nearly allied to torpor and sleep, and often ending in

one or other. The first effect is decidedly agreeable, and the second not unpleasant, were it only that it expels ennui, the constant foe of the idle. The Turks, as we know, carry opium eating to the greatest extent, and often impair their faculties to such a degree, as to stand in need neither of business nor amusement. Tobacco has a similar effect, though not to the same extent. We can, therefore, be at no loss to account for the great consumption of this nauseous and unwholesome drug; for if it at first enliven, and afterwards stupify, it serves a double purpose to those who have no better means of procuring pleasure and driving away pain.

Children, though full of activity and fleeting desire, seem more subject to ennui than the very aged; and clever children, I think, more than others, until they find out some continuous employment, such as reading. It is the more singular that children should in any degree suffer from this evil, since all is new to them, but novelty alone will not fill the head.<sup>3</sup> They are, no doubt, much less liable to it than grown up people.

These examples may serve to shew us, that what-

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<sup>3</sup> The instance of children is a remarkable one in proof of the fact, how little a constant succession of desires can be kept up without a leading one; for after all his plays were exhausted, I have seen a child ready to cry, merely from the want of something to do. And if this be sometimes the case, where everything is new, and the mind easily filled up, what must occur in after life? The more we advance in years, until the faculties decline, the more we feel the necessity of a strong pursuit, and that for two reasons; every day brings less of novelty, and the intellect, gradually expanding, requires more copious food.



ever depresses the faculties, causes the tendency to ennui to decrease also. On the other hand, increase the desires in proportion to the faculties, and then these will find a direction wherein to exert themselves, and the man will be all activity. But the more we enlarge the latter without the former, the more will the vacancy be felt. Faculties then without desires proportionably strong give rise to ennui. Also, this want of desires deprives us of all the pleasures connected with such active pursuits as our faculties are really fit for.

On the other hand, desires too strong in proportion to our intellect lead to endless agitation, anxiety, and final disappointment. Here there is a total loss of tranquillity. From these two opposite conditions of mind then result the two opposite sorts of pain, the pains of ennui and those of anxiety. Persons whose desires are too weak for their faculties suffer from the former, those whose desires are too strong for their faculties suffer from the latter. From all this it follows, that where the faculties and desires are in equilibrium, there we may expect happiness ; whether the happiness be one of tranquillity chiefly, or of activity.

In extreme old age, both faculties and desires being often weak, there is an equilibrium between them, so that there is neither over-agitation from excess of desire, nor ennui from a disproportionate strength of faculty. The result, therefore, is tranquillity. In childhood, desires are pretty ardent ; but being principally for objects within reach, here again there is an equilibrium, and the pleasures of

activity are felt more than the pains of anxiety. It is in the intermediate period that the two opposite kinds of pain are most experienced, because there is then more frequently a striking disproportion between desires and faculties. But as these are found in their highest degree of intensity and perfection at that time of life, so, should they go well together, the degree of happiness of which we are susceptible will then be the greatest. We shall enjoy the pleasures of activity to the utmost extent without the loss of tranquillity.

Emotion is what we are constantly in search of, and rather than be without any, we prefer one in which the pain bears no inconsiderable proportion to the pleasure. Nothing is so intolerable as the continued feeling of vacuity. It renders life utterly tasteless, and gives us the most humiliating sense of the worthlessness of our existence. This hankering after emotion can alone explain the eagerness with which sports of the most cruel kind are frequently run after, such as English bull and badger baiting, Spanish bull fights,<sup>4</sup> and the gladiatorial shows of antiquity. It also accounts for the extraordinary crowds that flock to public executions, which, to a sensitive heart, communicate unmingled disgust, and it shows the origin of the ruinous passion for play.

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<sup>4</sup> The following anecdote may exemplify the hardness of heart and perversion of sentiment produced by these sanguinary exhibitions. A Spanish lady present at a bull-fight happening to see a Frenchman near her shudder with horror, cast upon him a look of inexpressible contempt, and called him *butter-hearted*, (*cœur de beurre*.)

It is certain, that high play must produce nearly as much pain as pleasure even before the game is up, but when the last fatal die is cast, never does man endure such intense misery. In general the previous fear of losing must nearly balance the hope of winning, and where the stake is excessive, probably exceeds it; but when the cast is unlucky, and all is over, the suddenness of the transition from riches or competence to poverty, surprise at the new situation, and the galling idea that self alone is to blame, all combine to overwhelm the mind with agony. Nothing can prove more clearly this utter wretchedness than the fact, that gaming is the most common cause of suicide. The emotions produced by deep tragedy and pathetic tales are no doubt partly of a painful nature, and yet they are very much courted; but here the beauty of the language and the incidents, and the correct imitation of nature throw the balance greatly on the side of pleasure. Persons little alive to beauty often dislike tragedy. In countries where nearly all public worship consists in preaching, pulpit oratory is of course very highly prized; and clergymen who terrify their audience are generally more popular than those who deliver sensible but cold discourses. Such fiery preachers are there much run after, because they excite emotion, though, if their hearers were to bring home to themselves what is said, many ought to feel rather uncomfortable.

So great, indeed, is this longing for strong emotion, that for want of greater interests, we see people work themselves up into a sort of enthusiasm about small matters, about an actress, a singer, &c. *Ils se font*

*de l'enthousiasme*, as the French say. We may remark this particularly in Paris and other capital cities, the resort of persons having no professed object in life, and where consequently the necessity for amusements is strongly felt. These amusements have their value, for the busy as well as the idle, though chiefly for the latter, and they give an outward appearance of gaiety, but if we go beyond the surface, they rather indicate a want of more solid felicity.<sup>5</sup> Under the Greek Empire, where the lively spirit of the people could find no fit occupation, it vented itself in contests between the rival factions of the circus, which at one time convulsed the state and deluged the capital with blood.

I cannot help remarking in this place, how necessary it is to go to the real fountains of human happiness, in order to form correct judgments concerning various modes of life. When we know the essential elements, we can pronounce between the modes with some confidence; otherwise we may dispute for ever without arriving at any certain conclusion. The gaiety of the French, and the gravity of the English are frequently mistaken by superficial observers for happiness and unhappiness.

If it be true that we are constantly in quest of emotion, it follows that we ought to value a strong desire more than any other, because it is much more permanent. Many emotions are exceedingly fleeting

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<sup>5</sup> I have heard a singular saying, which, being in point, it may be worth while here to record. *Paris est le seul endroit où l'on peut vivre sans bonheur.*

in their nature, but this may endure for years, and animate life till its close.

With the following maxims of Bacon we may sum up the foregoing reflections :—

“ Qui sapit desiderium quærat : nam qui non aliquid insig-  
niter appetit, ei omnia ingrata sunt et tædio plena.”

“ Non est melior ordinatio animi quam ex imperio affectus  
alicujus insignis.”

II. Philosophers, moralists, and poets have united in extolling the pleasures of Hope. Now hope is nothing but desire, combined with belief in the probability of the attainment of its object. The belief may vary in every conceivable degree from a bare possibility to nearly absolute certainty, and the compound state of mind may receive different appellations accordingly, as it rises from a bare wish to hope, from hope to expectation, from expectation to confidence, but the essential elements of these three are still the same, and vary only in degree. In all, emotion is combined with relation ; a desire with a judgment. Now in order that a desire may be either strong or permanent, it is necessary that it be united with such a belief, otherwise it merely passes through the mind and leaves no trace behind. We may feel a momentary wish for things quite beyond our reach, but no more ; the impossibility of attainment stifles it almost in its birth. We do not hear of persons in the humbler walks of life falling in love with those far above them, though the converse is by no means uncommon. Therefore the difference of manners and tastes will not alone account for the fact. The pea-

sant does not desire the wealth and station of the nobleman, nor the nobleman the splendor of a throne; but the one may long to become a little farmer, and the other to rise to a dukedom. If the throne be elective, as formerly in Poland, or liable to be upset by ambition, then indeed, the prize being supposed attainable, desire may arise and grow into hope. The more frequently, and the more recently a government has been overthrown, the more chance does there seem of another downfall, and on that account it really is less secure, for the wishes, and hence the projects of the restless are fostered by the probability. A minister is never so violently assailed as when he is supposed to be tottering; and being thought weak, he really is so. The most triumphant minister this country ever saw lived to see his opponents recede in despair. They almost ceased to wish for a fall of which they could see no prospect. The revolution of 1830 aroused the reformers of England, for they saw that reform was within their grasp, and every change, even the most radical, has since been more ardently wished, because it was thought possible. Those foes to innovation are the most far-seeing who resist it from the very first, for every novelty suggests and facilitates another by creating a belief that it may be realised.

We here see the reason of the great stress which the gospel lays upon faith. Without faith or belief there can be no hope, and without hope there is no religion.

As to the degree of belief necessary to keep alive desire, no general rule can be given, so much does it

vary in different individuals. Some require a very strong persuasion to sustain the wish and prompt to action, while others can desire and labour almost against hope. It may be remarked that the greater the natural tendency to desire in general, or to any one kind in particular, the less probability is required, and vice versâ. If a man be of an ardent character, a trifling faith will suffice, but if he be indolent, little short of certainty will do. Very frequently, no doubt, the strong desire creates a firm belief, but not always. When a wish continues for some time, it naturally suggests a train of corresponding thoughts, and leads the mind insensibly to those topics and arguments which favour the ruling emotion. Such is one of the most remarkable and important effects of this class of mental phenomena. They constitute directly by far the greater part of our happiness, and by swaying the intellect, they in fact govern the man. Emotion is the parent of attention, and hence of invention, and of all advancement in real knowledge. Our opinions are for ever exposed to its influence, secret though it be. If we feel strongly on any subject we must attend to it, if we attend we must think, and if we think we shall probably gain ideas be they right or wrong. So, if we wish strongly for any object, we are impelled to meditate upon it, and the wish alternating with thought, constantly tends to give a certain direction to the latter. Thus it is, that desire has so strong a power over our opinions, and inclines us to believe as probable our bright but airy visions. Still this effect is not universal, for persons there are aware of this law of their nature, and therefore on

their guard against it. These are so much afraid of falling into error from the insidious influence of passion, that they run, or at least try to run into the opposite extreme, and doubt because they desire. In this way they may perhaps succeed in keeping the middle course; for if a bough incline too much in one direction, we ought to bend it in the other, more than we would otherwise wish. This line of conduct is evidently the result of reflection, and therefore not likely to be very general. But others there are whose very eagerness seems to abate their faith. They long so ardently after an object, and imagination in consequence so heightens its importance, that its attainment seems too much to be looked for. "It is too good to be true," is no unusual saying, and the sentiment is founded in nature. When we desire very strongly, we also fear that we shall not succeed; in other words, we fear disappointment, and this disappointment we are unwilling to increase by allowing ourselves to believe that we shall be fortunate. Fear of the pain of failure is then the cause of our disbelief or doubt; and the more fear prevails in the character, the more will its consequence be felt. On the same principle, some upon hearing any unhappy rumour instantly believe the worst. They are afraid of nursing desires which may terminate in more bitter anguish. The passion of fear explains these apparent anomalies, which are wholly unaccountable by reference to desire alone.

Desire being intended to lead to action, and hence to gratification, it is easy to see and admire the wisdom of the First Cause which willed that our wishes



should be bounded by our power of attainment. From a few unhappy cases we may judge what would have been the effects of an opposite law, and so find occasion to venerate the goodness of the same great Cause. Now and then we meet with hoary sinners whose powers have decayed long before their longings, and who live like some fallen spirits, mentioned by Dante, tormented with desire without hope. In all large capitals, particularly in Paris, there is also a set of men to be found, who with means very small, and minds badly regulated, are constantly hankering after the endless luxuries and amusements that are strewed around them, but of which they cannot partake. These outward sources of pleasure act as a tempting bait at which they are perpetually nibbling, yet never dare to swallow. The taste, however, is just sufficient to keep alive a desire which can never be fully gratified. Numerous objects of unattainable enjoyment acting upon a diseased state of mind sufficiently account for this phenomenon, which is so well known in Paris, that the phrase to live *en rage* is commonly used to express it.

There is, probably, no part of the character which can so little be modified by education as the greater or less tendency to hopefulness. It is not asserted that education can here do nothing, but nature assuredly does very much more. In nothing do we see greater differences between men. Taking the two extremes, there is no one who would not prefer the sanguine to the desponding disposition, but still it may be a question whether we can be too sanguine. Hume in his own life has said that he considered himself more fortunate with such a tendency to hope, than if he

had been born to ten thousand a year ; and on the whole I doubt not he was right. The principal inconveniences attached to minds of this sort, are, first, that in constantly looking forward they are apt to disregard the present ; secondly, their liability to disappointment. It follows directly from the principle of occupation to be afterwards dwelt upon, that the more we are engaged with the future the less *can* we be taken up with the present, and therefore we may neglect many duties, and lose many gratifications for which the present is the fit occasion. Moralists have often dwelt on the absurdity of our complaining of the general shortness of life while we are wishing it away in detail ; but it is clear that if the future did not appear to us in more bright colours than the present, we should not long for its coming. Therefore it belongs to the sanguine disposition to make little of the passing hour. Again, by constantly dwelling on the future, its gratifications are forestalled, and that in two ways ; first, by exaggeration, and secondly, by wearing out novelty ere the time, for what we have long thought of, when it comes is no longer new. Both lead to disappointment, for both render the promised bliss less than we had expected ; and disappointment is a cause of bitterness, that gnawing canker of the soul. Some however there are whose lives may be compared to a ball of India rubber, which though constantly falling to the earth as often bounds from it again. Their hopes are for ever being blasted, but instantly they shoot out anew. Disappointment has no hold on these elastic spirits ; they are restless and buoyant as a

healthy child, and their tears dry up as soon. Pleasure is their constant companion; pain but a momentary visitor; for they enjoy the advantages of hope, and scarcely know its evils.<sup>6</sup>

This is an instance of the sanguine temperament pushed to its utmost extreme, and nothing, it would seem, can well be more favourable to happiness. It is apt, no doubt, to encourage very wild projects, which may end in ruin to the individual, as well as to all around him; and therefore where found, a more than usual judgment is necessary. Otherwise the extreme of hopefulness might lead to the extreme of folly. But to desire ardently and yet bear disappointment well, must be allowed to be the most happy disposition imaginable.

It will be shown under another head what is the kind of hope which chiefly contributes to our happiness, and in what way it conduces to that end. In the mean time we may observe that if a tendency to hope be good, that to fear is assuredly most unfortunate. Fear has been implanted in our nature as a preservative against danger, but when carried too far it produces just the opposite effect; for it dims the clearness of the understanding and unnerves the energy of the will. While it calls up airy spectres to haunt and torment the brain, it overlooks the substantial forms

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<sup>6</sup> At this moment I have in my eye an individual, who having suffered for years under one of the most painful diseases to which the frame is liable, and having consulted one physician after another without success, still feels confident of being cured. “*L’espérance toute trompeuse qu’elle est sert au moins à nous conduire à la fin de la vie par un chemin agréable.*” *Roche foucauld.*

which really lie in our way. It possesses the opposite qualities of a convex and a concave lens, for in magnifying certain dangers it equally diminishes the rest. The latter effect, indeed, is the necessary consequence of the former, for according to the principle of occupation, if the mind be engrossed with one thing, it must neglect another. Thus fear, which was meant for a friend, may become our worst foe.

Considered in itself and without reference to its consequences, fear is unalloyed misery. Therefore those characters and those conditions of life which are most liable to this emotion cannot be considered as enviable. Herein consists the misfortune of kings, who, as Bacon has observed, have few things to desire and many things to fear;<sup>7</sup> and the same may be said of all who have reached the pinnacle of their wishes. They cannot rise, but they may fall. Therefore those pursuits are to be preferred which, instead of terminating in a fixed point, admit of an indefinite progress. We must always have an end in view, but it is well when this end serves to conduct us on to another. Moralists and satirists have often laughed at this chase which is ever ending, and yet is still beginning; but in deriding what is most agreeable to our nature, they have ridiculed that nature itself.

Were we to exercise our fancy in picturing a hell upon earth, we should search for an original in the hearts of those tyrants who having overthrown a constitution by violence, have afterwards ruled by

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<sup>7</sup> Essay on Empire.

force. Depending for support on a few interested followers, they govern the mass through the same passion to which they themselves are a prey. They have little left to desire ; much, every thing, to fear. Tormented with terror, they at last distrust every one, even their own family, as that tyrant of old, who used to mount to his solitary bed-room through a trap-door, and draw up the ladder after him.<sup>8</sup> The mighty Julius himself, the conqueror of the Gauls and Britons, of Pompey and Cato, is represented by Shakespeare, as trembling at the sight of Cassius.

Let me have men about me that are fat,  
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights ;  
Yond' Cassius has a lean and hungry look ;  
He thinks too much ; such men are dangerous.

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'Would he were fatter :—But I fear him not ;  
Yet if my name were liable to fear,  
I do not know the man I should avoid  
So soon as that spare Cassius.—  
I rather tell thee what is to be fear'd,  
Than what I fear, for always I am Cæsar.<sup>9</sup>

Cromwell, courageous as he naturally was, passed his latter years in continual alarm. Such is the natural punishment of crime.

Age is chiefly distinguished from youth by the greater prevalence of fear. The hopes of the young would be quite inconceivable by the old, were it not from the remembrance of what they once felt. Almost all the peculiarities attached to those different periods of life may be accounted for from this cir-

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<sup>8</sup> Alexander of Pheræ.

<sup>9</sup> Julius Cæsar, Act i.

cumstance alone. "Young men," says Bacon, "in the conduct and manage of actions embrace more than they can hold, and more than they can quiet, fly to the end without consideration of the means and degrees, pursue some few principles which they have chanced upon absurdly, care not to innovate, which draws unknown inconveniences; use extreme remedies at first, and that which doubleth all errors, will not acknowledge or retract them, like an unready horse that will neither stop nor turn. Men of age object too much, consult too long, adventure too little, repent too soon, and seldom drive business home to the full period, but content themselves with a mediocrity of success."<sup>10</sup> The correctness of this description few, I suppose, will deny. Now, most of these distinguishing characteristics may be traced to the hopefulness of youth and the timidity of age. True, it may be said, that superior knowledge and experience produce greater caution, by pointing out many dangers which youthful ignorance had never even suspected. This may be correct, and may help to account for the greater prevalence of fear or caution, as it is often called when it exists in a modified degree; but the reasoning plainly assumes that the fact cannot be disputed.

As ignorance often leads to courage, so does knowledge to timidity. Very bold riders frequently lose much of their daring after having been at a school, where they first became acquainted with danger from being taught to guard against it. Old soldiers know

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<sup>10</sup> Essay of Youth and Age.

the perils they run much better than young recruits, and therefore for hazardous enterprises the latter are often preferable. They may be less steady, but they are better for a sudden exploit. The fears, then, of the aged may be partly owing to experience, but they are not the less real; and as years creep on they are apt to run into excess, and poison the cup of life. This consideration alone would prove to us the blessedness of youth.

III. Another and most important consequence of firm desires remains yet to be mentioned. It will not be disputed that decision of character is of the utmost importance in all our undertakings, great as well as small, and that both immediately and remotely it is eminently favourable to happiness. Now decision of character results from strong desires. In most cases where our personal good only is concerned, desire leads the way, and judgment follows after. Where the intellect is left to itself, unbiassed by any desire, the more clear-sighted the more difficulty there often is in coming to a decision. In most steps to be taken, there are so many conceivable advantages and disadvantages, that, in the want of a predominant liking, it becomes a matter of extreme difficulty to determine between them. It is this liking alone which can fix the wavering mind. Imagination soon takes the colour of the prevailing passion, and the judgment is not backward in finding out arguments to favour it, and in devising means for its gratification.

This I believe to be the order of things in all cases where we pursue any object with eagerness. When the desire which prompts us to action is the result of

a calm review of all the circumstances in which we are placed, that is, when it is entirely the offspring of reason, it is seldom sufficiently strong to give great energy to our conduct. Unquestionably violent desires tend to pervert the judgment, as all are aware. On the other hand, it has been less observed that, from the absence of desire, judgment is left like a ship without a rudder, tossed about by the waves, sometimes driven towards this shore, sometimes towards that, never reaching the port, or at least never in time. When it does arrive, the tide is already out and the harbour dry. Such is an irresolute character. Judgment has to determine what is best to be done; but what is best to one may not be so to another; for this must, in an essential degree, depend upon the likings, the permanent likings, of the person concerned. Unless, then, there be some previous likings or dislikes, how can a judgment be formed?

If a boy have a strong wish to go to sea, and if there be reason to think that the inclination will be permanent, it may be very advisable that he should go to sea, because, on this supposition, it is the line of life most likely to conduce to his happiness; whereas to another boy similarly situated in all outward respects, but without the same desire, such a course could by no means be recommended. This familiar example may serve to illustrate the truth, that, in forming our judgment as to any pursuit, our desires, our permanent desires, are and ought to be consulted. If desires we had none, or two equal but inconsistent ones, it would be impossible to come to a decision.



“ Reason the means, affections choose our end.”<sup>11</sup>

“ Know thyself,” was a maxim of the Greek sages ; and no part of self-knowledge is more essential to our success and well-being than an acquaintance with our permanent as distinguished from our fleeting desires. Those who are ignorant in this respect, or who are incapable of lasting desires, pass their lives in a perpetual succession of trials which lead to no result ; for they tire of everything before they can make it answer. But success in life mainly depends upon having a fixed end constantly in sight. Happy they who know their own mind, and, knowing it, pursue !

The advantages of decision of character are of two kinds, immediate and remote. When tossed about in the ocean of irresolution, at one time inclining this way, at another that, we can enjoy but little happiness. Inconstancy and doubt oppress the mind with a consciousness of weakness, and produce a painful feeling of humiliation leading to low spirits ; whereas a firm decision rouses the whole soul, gives it the sentiment of its force, and communicates cheerfulness.

Viewed in its more remote consequences, decision of character really governs the world. In active life, whether public or private, political or domestic, it masters even intellects of a superior order who fail in energy of will ; for while these are planning and debating, the other has begun to perform. Before speculation is finished, the time for application is

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<sup>11</sup> Night Thoughts. N. vi.

often gone. Besides, nothing imposes upon others so much as the appearance of decision, whether in opinion or in conduct. Men are naturally prone to adopt the sentiments and follow the advice of those who have confidence in themselves, while they slight the cautious and the hesitating. Superior self-confidence often passes current for superior ability. Future experience may, indeed, show that some of the plans proposed were better than those put in practice, but it cannot recall the past. Thus the bold, the rapid, the decided, get the start of the thoughtful and the wise, especially in stirring times. No one will pretend that the men who led the French Revolution were always the most enlightened which the country could boast. On the contrary, they were, in general, of ordinary intellect, but reckless and daring in the extreme. Such were the audacious Danton, the unprincipled Robespierre, the visionary St. Just, and the blood-stained blasphemous Murat. Before these and other chiefs of the *sans-culottes* fell the eloquent and accomplished *Gironde*, with Condorcet, Lavoisier, and all the flower of France.

Superior intellect, united with firmness of will, forms a character of a very high order, such as Hannibal, Cæsar, Alexander, Columbus, Cromwell, Washington, Napoleon, Wellington, and others, whose actions have had an immense influence on their own and future times. This union constitutes what we commonly call *greatness*, or, when in a less degree, *strength* of character. But a firm will is sometimes found in those who are rather low in intellect, and then it is named *obstinacy*. Persons who fail in firm-

ness of purpose, may or may not be possessed of a clear judgment, for instances of both are not uncommon; but in either case, the character is *weak*. A defect in intellect is not usually termed weakness, but *folly*. Thus a man poor in understanding, but not in will, is an *obstinate fool*; he who fails in both is a *weak fool*.

IV. From all that has now been said on the subject of desire, we are able to draw some important practical conclusions. What are we to think of those continual attacks upon the passions which we meet with in satirical and moral writings? If there be any truth in what has been above advanced, it follows, that to run down the passions generally is nothing but empty declamation. This may have arisen, in the first instance, from a confined sense given to the word; but if by it be meant any strong desire, then nothing can well be more absurd than such indiscriminate attacks. It is not desire or passion in general that is to be kept down, but particular kinds of desire; while others, on the contrary, ought greatly to be encouraged.

This leads me to observe, that there is only one effectual way in which any propensity can be combated, and that is, by fostering another of a different sort. Do we wish to restrain the self-regarding desires? let us endeavour to rouse the social. Would we depress sense? let us raise the intellect, the imagination, and the affections. Man to be happy, must have wishes and interests, so that we never shall succeed in weaning him from those he has, unless we give him others in stead. In vain do we vilify his tastes and pursuits to induce him to forsake his ways; for

though the words may strike upon his ears, they change not the soul within. Unless we succeed in giving him more worthy desires our labour will be in vain. Can we suppose, that the libertine and voluptuary will change his course of life before he has been made to conceive and feel enjoyments of a nobler sort? It is chiefly by indirect means that we can hope to have an influence over him.

The moral harmony of man depends upon a certain proportion between his various desires; and this proportion may be destroyed as much by the feebleness of one as by the excessive strength of another. Thus in comparing two men, the one seemingly quite wrapt up in self, the other very attentive to his neighbour, we might say with Bishop Butler, that the difference arose, not because self-love was too strong in the former, but because benevolence was too weak. This may be so, but it must always be difficult, if not impossible, to determine whether strength of self-love over-bear benevolence, or benevolence be too weak to offer effectual resistance to self-love. And although as a metaphysical question it may be curious, in a practical point of view, it does not appear to be important. In either case the remedy is the same, for whether benevolence be absolutely or only relatively feeble, it ought equally to be encouraged.

The grand object of all moral education ought to be to stir up those inclinations which are naturally weak, and so to tame, or at least curb, those which are apt to run into excess. It will readily be granted that the self-regarding desires are more likely to become excessive or exclusive than the social; and

that the natural tendency to the pleasures of sense is stronger than to those of the intellect, the imagination, and the affections. Moreover, the gratification of the present hour, fleeting though it may be, is apt to be preferred to a more permanent but distant interest. From these general facts, which are amply confirmed by experience, we draw the following conclusions. Moral Education ought to have three principal objects in view ; first to encourage the social desires, and thus keep in check the self-regarding ; secondly, to foster a taste for the pleasures of the intellect, the imagination, and the affections, and so discourage the sensual ; thirdly, to teach self-control.

Man, though born with a capability for much that is great and exalted, would have scarcely any idea beyond the pleasures of sense, were he left by others to follow his natural inclinations. Education alone can call forth this latent capability, and create a taste for refined enjoyments. What a miserable miscalculation is that which seeks for happiness chiefly in the indulgences of the senses ! For the sake of short-lived gratifications we lose the constant pleasure derived from a consciousness of the dignity of our nature, and get a distaste for purely mental delights which are very durable.

Since man, when left to himself, degenerates into an animal but little raised above the brutes, and since education alone can draw out his susceptibilities for the joys of the intellect,—of the imagination,—of the affections ; wherever we find a strong attachment to these, we may be sure of a cultivated mind. A considerable part of mankind, even of those who

have leisure from manual toil, know little of the pleasures derived from the two former, though there are few in civilized regions who do not share in the last. Travellers in picturesque countries are often surprised at the insensibility of the peasantry to all the beauties around them, and these again equally wonder what strangers come to see. Even among those who are called well educated, how many are dead to high intellectual delight as well as to the charms of poetry! Even the great Newton called poetry ingenious nonsense, because he could not relish it; and how many treat metaphysics with no greater ceremony!

The pleasures of the imagination, and the higher pleasures of the social affections are often stigmatized as *romantic* by those who know them not. This is one of those words which are found so convenient, when it is wished to throw blame or ridicule upon anything without assigning a reason. If by *romantic* be meant *unreal*, no error can be greater, for no pleasures are more intense, and except those of intelligence, none are more permanent. Opposed to *romantic* is *worldly*. A very worldly person is one who is dead to these enjoyments, whose pleasures are mostly self-regarding, and also of the grosser sort.

If man without education be naturally sensual, it is no less true that he is also selfish. Men may form erroneous notions of their interest, they may pursue apparent rather than real good, and they may often be diverted from their permanent advantage by a present temptation; but in all this we see the tendency to self more or less guided by reason. No

one seems to think that this tendency is too weak, however badly it may be directed.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand the tendency to sympathize with the pleasures and pains of others, and to desire their welfare is very rarely too strong, and in the want of cultivation, it may scarcely appear at all. Here then again education steps in and opens our minds to feelings as necessary to our own happiness as to that of others; since the pleasures derived from the exercise of the benevolent affections, whether towards a few or many, are probably the greatest of which our nature is susceptible. The culture of these affections has a twofold good effect; for it checks those two great tendencies of our nature, the tendency to self, and that to sense; whereas the improvement of the intellect and imagination counteracts the latter alone. How can a being immersed in sensual indulgences have any relish for the exalted and lasting delights of love and friendship?<sup>13</sup> But without supposing a

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<sup>12</sup> I have elsewhere said, "No oversight is more common in philosophy than by changing the definition of a word to arrive at conclusions which wear the air of novelty, while nothing is really new but the altered signification of a term."—*Essay on the Distribution of Wealth*, part ii. ch. 3. Much as I admire many of the speculations of Bishop Butler in his famous Sermons at the Rolls, I must say, that this remark seems to apply to what he there says of self-love. He maintains that self-love, far from being too strong in man, is very often too weak; but when we consider what he means by self-love, we find that he excludes from it all the self-regarding passions, and takes it to signify solely a calm rational view of our interest. This definition being borne in mind, his conclusion appears neither so startling nor so new.

<sup>13</sup> It was observed of Fox as a remarkable circumstance, that

devotion to such indulgences in particular, the circumstance of constantly pondering upon our own interests, of whatever kind they may be, tends amazingly to shut the heart to social affections, and therefore to deprive us of the greatest happiness of life.

Between the education of man and of woman, this is the grand difference to be made, that the imagination of the latter and the intellect of the former should be cultivated with peculiar care. In either case, both ought to be improved, but with the distinction now mentioned ; and for these reasons. Public affairs are exclusively managed by men, and most private ones also which require a great stretch of intellect ; while women have generally some male protector and guide. Again, the peculiar office of woman is to delight, and form the ornament, whether of a domestic circle or of a more extended society, and for this purpose imagination is necessary. Besides, to prevent jealousies and dissensions in married life, it is of great consequence that the intellectual superiority of the man should be undoubted. When the one guides, and the other enlivens and adorns, all goes on well ; otherwise, there is a perpetual struggle.

If men generally surpass women in intellect, these, on the other hand, possess a greater refinement of

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in spite of his dissipated life, he continued to the last the same simple, warm-hearted creature as ever. Nothing could show more strongly the excellence of his nature. What would have spoilt any other man could not spoil him. Simplicity and warmth of affection rarely long survive innocence.



feeling. They are certainly less sensual than men. How little in comparison do they care for the pleasures of the table !

We may notice three differences in mind with respect to our feelings or sensibilities ; strength, delicacy, and refinement.

Strength of feeling exists in those who are capable of feeling intensely and permanently, though they may not easily be roused.

Delicacy of feeling implies that feelings of whatever kind are easily excited.

Refinement of feeling signifies a susceptibility to the pleasures of the intellect, imagination, and affections, rather than to those of sense.

Persons of strong feelings are often difficult to move, but when moved, their impressions are deep and lasting ; while those of delicate feelings, though easily warmed, are wont as quickly to cool.

Strong feelings are seldom found but in company with a strong intellect ; whereas delicacy of feeling is frequently united with an understanding of no very high order. In common discourse the word *sensibility* is often used to signify a peculiar susceptibility to the tender impressions, such as pity and love ; but in this work it means the simple fact of susceptibility to pleasure or pain,—emotion or sensation in general, without any reference to kind or degree. In the former sense, sensibility is one sort of delicacy, and as it is thought amiable and pleasing, especially in women, it is very frequently put on where it does not really exist. This sort of affectation seems to have been more common formerly than

now, probably, because the reality was more highly prized.

We lately remarked that women have generally more refinement than men. They have also more delicacy, but on the whole less strength of feeling. Their social affections, however, though not so violent as those of men, appear to be quite as lasting, and in the case of love much more so. Their attachment to their children is even more intense than that of fathers, and fully as durable. These are important exceptions. But the self-regarding passions are commonly much stronger in man.

That women surpass us in quick or delicate sensibility there can be no doubt. This is in truth one of their principal charms. It allows them to catch the perfume of a thousand little flowers that strew the path of life, over which the foot of man would pass with unheeding tread. It keeps them attentive to the little wants of all around, enables them to divine a wish even before expressed, to avoid everything that might possibly wound the feelings of others, and it prompts them to seek out, to visit, and relieve the poor and unfortunate. That women are peculiarly alive to pity is proved by the widest experience. The African traveller Park has said, that in all his wanderings among civilized or savage nations, whatever might have been his treatment from man, he had always reason to bless the tender sympathy of woman.

Persons of the strongest feelings are often esteemed cold by such as know them little, because they are not easily moved; while those of delicate feelings

please us at the very first. The union of great strength with delicacy is rare, but not unexampled.

One more distinction deserves to be noticed. Though we are certainly much indebted to nature for refinement, as well as for delicacy and strength of feeling, yet the former depends far more upon education than the two latter. To raise the mind above the pleasures of sense, and fix it on those of the intellect, imagination, and affections, is, as before observed, one grand object of mental culture. This is true refinement, or mental civilization.

I may conclude this head by remarking that different orders of mind require very different treatment in order to keep them in a healthy state. Persons naturally of high spirits and of delicate sensibilities, if they have fit objects at home, are supported by their buoyancy of humour, and can do without outward amusements, though they relish them much when these fall in their way. Others, of great equanimity of spirits, and of rather dull sensibility, get on in an uniform manner, without at all thinking of such amusements, which they are little capable of enjoying. The former can do without, but the latter cannot relish them.

There is a third class, however, naturally rather of low spirits, but of lively sensibilities. To them, pleasures, commonly so called, are not only agreeable, but useful; for, by varying the train of ideas, they prevent melancholy, and improve the whole tone of mind. While these can relish amusements, they cannot well do without them.

## CHAPTER II.

## ON SOME PARTICULAR DESIRES.

SECTION I.—*The Principal Desires enumerated.*

HAVING treated of desire in general, we come now to consider some of the particular desires. It has already been remarked that it does not belong to a work of this nature to give a general analysis and classification of the emotions, or to trace the sources from which they spring. This is the province of pure mental philosophy, otherwise called metaphysics. Moral science views the emotions chiefly in their effects upon human conduct and human happiness, and as desires and fears are the most important in this respect, it naturally pays the greatest attention to these. Even when thus limited the subject is still sufficiently vast, probably quite enough of itself to fill a volume, and therefore we shall be excused from entering into a minute detail, that would draw us too far away from the main track which we wish to pursue. Having already made sundry observations on desire in general, we shall now content ourselves with remarks on the more important species.

We must begin by calling to mind the grand distinction, which was formerly laid down between the self-regarding and the social desires. Now, almost every good which we are capable of desiring for

ourselves may be classed under one or other of the eight following heads: 1. Sensual gratifications. 2. Amusement. 3. The Affections of others. 4. Wealth. 5. Power. 6. Reputation. 7. Knowledge; and lastly, what is necessary to them all, Continued Existence.

It will be remarked that we have not put pleasure as a separate object of desire, and for this reason, that pleasure is intimately associated with each, so much so, indeed, as to have induced many to suppose that we never really long for any thing else, however varied the forms in which it may present itself:

“ Whate’er the motive, pleasure is the mark,”

says Young, and many are of his opinion. To settle this disputed point, belongs not to a work like the present, but to purely mental philosophy. Whether pleasure be or be not our sole aim, one thing is certain, that we cannot wish for any thing without connecting with it ideas, either of positive pleasure or of the absence of pain. These ideas are, at least, inseparably united with every thing that we long for. It may sometimes remain in doubt, whether the pleasure in prospect first give rise to the desire, or whether certain objects directly rousing desire, pleasure follow after and react upon the previous passion; but whichever view we may adopt, desire and pleasure are indissolubly associated. In either case, our moral conclusions must remain the same. It is because the question is a purely speculative one, or has at least no perceptible application to practice, that it appertains to metaphysical and not to moral philosophy. It would require but a very slight dif-

ference in language to suit either theory; for instead of saying desire of wealth, of power, of knowledge, &c. we should have merely to insert a word, and talk of desire of the pleasures of wealth, power, &c. Nay, even this difference could only be maintained at first, for having made the statement in the outset, it would become too tedious to repeat so many words on every occasion, and therefore an ellipse would be indispensable. Those readers, therefore, who think that pleasure is our only aim, may supply the ellipse for themselves.

This being understood, we now proceed to observe, that every good is valued by us on two distinct accounts; first, as it is in itself; secondly, as it leads to some other good. But there is one good in particular, for which all the eight above mentioned, or others, if there be such, may be highly prized, independently of the gratification which they offer from their own peculiar nature. They may all flatter our love of Superiority. This is the most general desire of human nature, for it is found in every walk of life, and mixes with every pursuit, gay as well as grave, trifling as well as important.<sup>1</sup> There is, perhaps, not a good we are capable of possessing which may not feed this universal passion. Taking in order the eight above stated, sense seems to afford the least grounds

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<sup>1</sup> In Madame de Sevigné's Letters, there is a story told of Louis the XIVth's head cook, which is a very curious instance of the force which this passion may acquire even in the most trivial pursuits. He prided himself so much on his skill in arranging a dinner, that he is said to have killed himself from vexation, because one day an expected dish of fish did not arrive in time!

for distinction; but yet there are persons who pride themselves on their superior powers of hearing and seeing, and above all, on a delicacy of taste, which can perceive sundry flavours in one dish, and accurately determine the quality of various wines, and the merits of different vintages. Among some savage nations, where the senses of hearing and seeing are greatly cultivated, I have no doubt that those who peculiarly excel in these faculties, look upon themselves with no slight complacency. Amusements are valued not only as such, but also because they can confer distinction; particularly those where skill may be shown, as chess, whist, tennis, rackets, cricket, shooting, coursing, and horse racing. People dislike very much to lose at chess, and even at certain games of cards, not merely because they lose their money, but because they feel humiliated. They have shown a want of skill, or at the least of good fortune, for even this may be made a ground of superiority. Not a few feel pride in being called lucky fellows. We delight in knowing that we possess the affections of others, but we glory in the thought that we can easily command them. Wealth is sought after as the source of numberless comforts, and also as conferring a well-marked distinction. Up to a certain point, desire of power is the same as the desire of absence of restraint, or of liberty, so dear to the human breast; but it may swell into an insatiable thirst of dominion over others, and dominion is superiority. While reputation is a passport to general favour, and is necessary for success in every pursuit, it also leads us to fame or glory, which raises us high in the world.

Knowledge is charming for its own sake, and also on account of the high consideration in which its votaries are held. Zealots have made even continued existence a ground of superiority, and in condemning to annihilation or torments all who differ from themselves, have felt their hearts swell with pride. To be one out of a few elect, and all others reprobate, is a thought as distressing to benevolence, as flattering to love of distinction. Spiritual pride is often the greatest among those who most preach humility, because the speculative doctrines they hold, falling in with natural bias, are too much for their practical precepts.

The social desires are of two different, nay, opposite sorts, the benevolent and the malevolent; of which the former are subdivided into general and particular, or such as we feel towards mankind at large, and those which are confined to certain individuals. The malevolent desires admit not of this subdivision, they being only particular; for though we were to believe some accounts of general misanthropy, such instances must be looked upon as mental diseases, no more belonging to the regular and healthy state of man than madness itself. We cannot hate those who have caused us no evil, intentional or unintentional, and the immense mass of mankind must be included under this head. Good-will towards others, however faint, is the ordinary condition of the mind; ill-will, but an exception. In one case, indeed, namely, national antipathy, ill-will may be felt by many towards many, on account of some national injury, real or supposed, but still the vast majority of the human race are re-



garded with favour rather than the contrary. The hatred too in this case is rather for the abstract than the concrete, for the nation than the individuals who compose it, for when the inhabitants of the two countries meet, except in time of war, they perform to each other the usual duties of humanity. With respect to the benevolent affections, it is clear that the same sorts of good which we desire for ourselves, we may wish also for others. We like to see our fellow creatures in general, but especially our friends, partaking in moderation of the pleasures of sense, amused, loved by those around them, above poverty, free from undue restraint, held in good repute, well-informed, and enjoying long life here with the hopes of happiness hereafter. To desire superiority for every one is, however, a contradiction; and though we like to see our friends superior to others, we can hardly wish them to surpass ourselves, especially in those points wherein we think to excel. In other points, we may tolerate, but cannot well rejoice in our friends' superiority over us. Therefore it is difficult for those who have exactly the same pursuit to be very sincere friends. To do away with rivalry a slight difference may be enough, but there must not be identity. Two professors, for instance, in the same university, but lecturing on different subjects, may be the best possible friends; and so may a barrister and a solicitor, a pleader and a conveyancer, but two barristers, or two physicians, practising in the same place, can hardly feel very warmly towards each other. They may indeed be good companions, for they have always subjects in common to

talk upon, but they can scarcely be real friends. Indeed, the quarrelsome temper of the medical faculty has long been quite notorious.

To each sort of good above enumerated, a similar desire must of course correspond ; but there are six in particular which deserve to be called the master passions of human nature. These are, 1. Love ; 2. Covetousness, terminating in avarice ; 3. Desire of Liberty, or mere absence of restraint, leading on to desire of positive power or Ambition ;<sup>2</sup> 4. Desire of Reputation, tending to desire of fame or glory ; 5. Desire of Knowledge or Curiosity ; 6. Desire of Life here and of continued existence hereafter. On each of these in order I shall offer some remarks.

But the pleasures of the senses and amusements must first detain us for a moment. Having already touched upon these, I need not now say much, but shall confine myself to a few observations on the subject of excesses.

If we look abroad in the world, we shall find three sorts of persons particularly addicted to excesses ; and they would not be so if they did not feel a *want* of them. These are,

First, those who lead a life of constant labour.

Secondly, those who do nothing.

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<sup>2</sup> It has not unfrequently been remarked, that great sticklers for liberty are sometimes very fond of domineering in their own sphere. In America, people may be heard advocating liberty and slavery in the same breath. This will not appear so strange, when we consider that desire of liberty being the desire that others should have no power over us, it easily passes into the wish that we should have positive power over them.

Thirdly, those who by reason of some calamity experience a great depression of spirits. To these may be added such persons as without any outward and evident cause, but merely from an unhappy temperament, labour under a like depression.

Now, though these remote causes be different, nay, opposite, it will, I think, readily appear that the state of mind resulting from them, that is the immediate cause which gives rise to the desire of excess, is in all the cases pretty much the same. It is a particular lowness or dejection, to get rid of which excesses are eagerly sought for. Constant hard labour, the total absence of any occupation, and a great calamity, all tend to produce this depression of spirits. The feeling becomes sometimes so insupportable, that people fly to any thing, however desperate, in order to drive it away : nor can we always blame them, for in such circumstances excesses are often necessary. To violent disorders, violent remedies. It is the *cause* of these excesses which we ought to try to obviate, namely, the state of mind ; for if we relieve this, the effects will cease of course. Thus we explain the tendency of the above three states of existence to push men to excesses. They do so by producing dejection. But is it certain that they have such a tendency ? Let us examine them separately. First, as to hard labour. Do we not see that the most laborious populations are those most addicted to drunkenness ? To what must we attribute the great use of spirituous liquors among the manufacturing people in England and Scotland ? Can we doubt that the dejection produced by constant toil is at least

one powerful cause. Men who have laboured all day in the over-heated atmosphere of a cotton-mill, with nothing to cheer and much to depress the mind ; or those whose work has been of a more severe, though otherwise less lowering nature, cannot be contented with some such gentle amusement as might suffice for persons whose general life was more agreeable. To make existence bearable, they must have some strong excitement. And this account is confirmed by the fact often observed, that the harder and more disagreeable the labour, the more improvident are the workmen. In these respects nothing can surpass colliery. The toil of colliers is not only very severe, but it is carried on under ground amidst foul air and dirty water. And it is well known that they never save, but live, when they can, sumptuously, and run into all kinds of excesses.<sup>3</sup> The business of coal-heaving is also most laborious, and the men engaged in it have long been noted as prodigious drinkers of porter.

This leads us to observe how difficult it must be to teach prudence to an over-worked population. To persuade men to forego their sole enjoyment must in truth be an arduous task. Were it even possible to give much education to people in such circumstances, this could not greatly avail, unless it should induce them to extirpate the root of the evil—early marriages, and the consequence, superabundant population. But that very misery which ought to prevent men from

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<sup>3</sup> I once received from the chief magistrate of a coal district in Scotland, a most vivid account of the dissipation and turbulence of Colliers.

marrying, serves to urge them to it, that at least they may have some pleasure in life. So insupportable is existence without enjoyment! Thus we are led to the grand truth, that unless the progress of population be duly checked, little can be done for the people. To say that the frequent practice of drunkenness is an effect of superabundant population, may appear somewhat strange, but it is nevertheless true. For it is the superabundance of labourers which obliges each to toil unremittingly; and out of this toil arises the necessity for excess.

The truth of these remarks will be further confirmed by a reference to countries where the vice of drunkenness is little prevalent, such as Italy and other southern nations. A Lazzarone at Naples, after having earned what is just sufficient to buy his macaroni and ice, cannot easily be prevailed upon to labour for any one. He prefers reclining in the shade, enjoying his meal, his ease, and the fine weather. Such an one can feel no want of drinking or other violent stimulus. The French are a less laborious people than the English, and also less given to excess.

And here I cannot help throwing out a hint, not to be followed up now, but which others may turn to some advantage. Since early marriages are the source of so much misery, we must naturally be desirous of knowing how they may be prevented. Now one of the principal incentives to marriage with all men, but with the poor especially, is the feeling of loneliness apt to attend celibacy. Though the rich are so much better provided for marriage than the poor, they can better do without it; because they can command servants to attend them, and companions, if

not friends, to sit round their hospitable board. But the poor man, who has neither wife nor female relation to keep his house, is desolate in the extreme. Returning from his daily labour, he finds a cold hearth and cheerless walls, without even the countenance of a domestic to welcome him home again. Can we, therefore, wonder that he should look out for a partner to break this silent gloom? Who else will prepare his evening meal, keep alive the cheerful blaze, and receive him with accents of kindness; and who but children will

“Climb his knees the envied kiss to share?”

How then shall we induce the poor man to forego for a season these tempting but dangerous joys? give him a comfortable house to receive him when his work is done, light the fire, lay the table, and collect society around him, and our task is accomplished. But how is this to be done? I answer, in the same way that gentlemen, even poor gentlemen, contrive to live in luxury, by means of association, or in familiar language, by clubs. Why should there not be clubs for the working classes as well as for the higher orders, on a scale suitable to their means? Are we not all aware of the immense advantage which single men of small fortune derive from such institutions. These have sometimes been found fault with on the ground that they render married men less domestic; but to single men they are invaluable; and the very objection shows only that they are too comfortable and agreeable. When those who have families and good private houses are apt to desert them for clubs, can we doubt that those who have neither

would be glad to have such a resource? It is impossible here to pursue this idea further; but leaving it to be improved upon by others, and hoping that the importance of the subject may excuse this brief digression, I return to our regular way.

But it is not only bodily labour which leads to a craving for excesses, since great mental exertion produces a similar effect. There are probably few instances of study more remarkable for continuance and intensity than such as we meet with among those young men at Oxford and Cambridge, who aim at the highest honours. The limited period during which their efforts are available, the number of competitors, the difficulty of the subjects, especially at Cambridge, where the whole range of mathematics must be gone through, the importance of the prize, both as to honour and subsequent emolument, the definite nature of the reward, its exclusive quality, for the success of one is the failure of another; and lastly, the ardour of youth; all conspire to urge to the greatest exertions. This is particularly the case at Cambridge, where every thing is given to merit, and where, after the examination, the names are arranged, not merely in classes, but individually. Indeed there can be little doubt, that the stimulus is too great, for many suffer from it afterwards, in mind as well as body; like a spring over-stretched, that can never recover all its former elasticity; and some are so disgusted by the labour they have undergone, that the end once attained, they throw away their books for ever. It might even be doubted on another ground, whether these great distinctions do much good; for people are too apt

to rest in honours early won. A high wrangler or a fellow in a large college, finds himself so much thought of within the precincts of the university, that he often forgets he is unknown elsewhere, and that his course of fame, so far from being finished, is scarcely yet begun. But what we have to notice at present is the immediate effect of these extreme mental exertions in leading to excess of another sort. The hardest readers are not unfrequently dissipated. Overworked and fatigued with poring over Greek and mathematics, they rush to supper, or wine parties, and renew their exhausted spirits by riot and jollity. Another and more harmless recreation is adopted by some, though it also has its evils; this is novel-reading. It is a singular fact, that some of the hardest students at Cambridge are the greatest readers of novels. These are taken up to change the current of ideas; and though they relieve the mind, they neither recruit the body nor give repose to the eyes, while they prevent that best recreation, exercise in the open air.

It has been remarked, that the English judges, who lead a life of great labour, are fond of witnessing the broadest buffoonery, and the most ridiculous pantomimes. This though not called an excess, is in its effects very much the same, for to them it affords more excitement than a natural and quiet representation. A late celebrated lord chancellor, remarkable for assiduity in his profession, was one of the keenest sportsmen in England.

Secondly, if it be true that great labour, bodily or mental, leads us to excesses, it is also certain that an absence of all occupation tends to a like effect. This,



I think, will be allowed. Indeed I must remark that if at college great readers are sometimes very dissipated, those who read not at all are more generally and more constantly so. With the former, excess is of rather rare occurrence, with the latter it is a daily affair. To what but to the want of occupation shall we attribute the rage for horse-racing and gambling, which still prevails among our aristocracy, as well as for drinking and cock-fighting, formerly more common than now?

Thirdly, that those whose spirits are much depressed by any calamity, are apt to indulge in excesses, is a truth that will not be disputed. The bottle has long been known as the friend of the wretched.

To sum up what has been said; we find that desire of excesses results from a certain languor or depression of mind produced by various causes of a painful nature. The feeling which results from over-exertion, and from calamity, is dejection, not ennui; that which follows upon want of occupation is ennui, which may terminate in dejection. There can scarcely then be a greater proof of a mind ill-constituted for happiness, than the frequent want of excesses.

This is not to say that all excesses are at all times to be avoided; on the contrary, they may occasionally do good on the principle of change, and break the uniformity of life: but they ought not to be felt as a want.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In the "De Augmentis" of Bacon, it is stated as an argument in favour of excesses, "*Languet mens quæ excessibus caret;*" but I would rather say, *Languet mens cui excessibus opus est.*

If a frequent want of violent excitement be a strong proof of an unhappy mind, a facility of being amused must surely denote the contrary. And if we examine the human mind, we shall see further reason to be convinced of this. It is a principle of our nature that emotions are apt to give rise to others of a similar kind. A man who has just met with some disappointment is ready to vent his ill-humour on all that surrounds him, even on brutes and things inanimate; while he who has received some agreeable intelligence is prepared to be pleased with every thing. In the former case, circumstances which, on other occasions, would give much satisfaction, the cheerful hearth, and smoking dinner, even the endearments of wife and children, cease to charm. Nothing gives pleasure. In the latter, mere trifles afford an unwonted gratification. If this be so, does it not follow that facility of being amused, of receiving pleasure, is a proof of a happy state of mind? Does it not show that the ordinary tenor of life is agreeable? Let us look at children. Perhaps the happiness of children has been exaggerated; for they certainly are not susceptible of the same high delights as men in the full enjoyment of their mental faculties. But allowing this, they cannot, if well treated, be called unhappy. Their pains are generally few and of short duration, and they have many pleasures. Now we know how easily they are amused. If then in grown people we notice the same facility, ought we not to conclude that the state of mind from which this arises is also a happy one?

The most that can be said against this is, that as

they are children in their amusements, it is probable they are also children in their minds, and though not positively unhappy, yet incapable of those exalted enjoyments which belong to men of enlarged and cultivated faculties, endued with strong intellect and strong feelings. And this, I am inclined to think, is often the case. The happiness of such persons resembles much that of children, and partly arises from a want of thought or serious reflection on any thing. Not that this is always so, for there are persons of great acquirements capable of being pleased with trifles; as Prince Potemkin, who used to amuse himself with Solitaire. The French in general are more easily amused than the English. That facility of being amused is in itself a good, it would be a waste of words to prove. The thing is self-evident. He who is hard to please must be frequently disappointed, and lose many gratifications, which others enjoy; while his occasions of amusement will be more rare, since costly pleasures cannot be had so often as cheap. When facility of being amused is united with strong intellect and strong feelings, then we truly have a happy compound.

## SECTION II.—*Love.*

WE must now turn our attention to the six master passions above enumerated; beginning with Love. The word Love sometimes signifies a liking for anything; more properly it means any benevolent affection towards our fellow-creatures, varying from the

most indiscriminate and weak, to the most concentrated and strong ; but in a peculiar sense it marks the most ardent and engrossing of all passions, that which exists between the sexes. When taken for any benevolent affection, Love certainly constitutes one of the principal elements of human happiness ; for there is always a pleasure in loving as well as in being loved, and sometimes an intense pleasure ; the feeling may be very permanent, and in some shape or other it runs throughout all society. Thus it is a source of enjoyment, at once keen, durable, and comprehensive.

All the ties that bind man to man may be classed under two heads ; those which he finds ready formed for him, and those which he forms for himself. A man is born a member of the great community of mankind, a citizen of some particular state, a relative of a private family ; but his wife, friends, or companions are of his own choice. General benevolence, patriotism, filial, fraternal, or other family ties connect us in the one case ; love, friendship, or good-fellowship in the other.

It is evident from this statement how widely diffused the feeling of Love must be, whatever modification it may assume, and consequently that it ought to form a most important element in our estimate of human felicity.

It falls not within the plan of this work to discuss in detail each of these sorts of Love ; but rather to consider what is common to them all ; or else, what is peculiar to that most remarkable kind to which the word Love is especially applied. If we take general

benevolence and Love between the sexes which constitute the two extremes of universality and weakness on the one hand, of concentration and force on the other, we shall be able to form a pretty correct notion as to the mean terms, since these must partake of the character of that extreme to which they most nearly approach.

I. Love under every form consists of at least two elements; first, a certain pleasure derived from the presence of the beloved object, or simply from reflecting upon it; and secondly, a desire of its good. These elements are essential; for wherever these are, there is love; and wherever they are not, there is none. Another desire is very often connected with the above, always, indeed, when Love is limited to certain individuals, and that is, desire of being loved in return. But the two former elements seem sufficient to constitute general benevolence; for though the benevolent man may wish for the good-will of others, yet, in numberless cases he feels an affection which he knows cannot be reciprocal. He longs for the happiness of nations which he may never visit, and he rejoices in the prosperity of millions who may never even hear of his name.

Considered as a source of happiness to the individual, the grand advantage of philanthropy is universality, and the chief drawback is general weakness. The objects of most other affections may be snatched from us in a moment, when we least expect it, and leave us a prey to all the agonies of grief; but as long as the human race exists, the benevolent man can never want beings to love. He walks out

on a sun-shine holiday, he sees the crowd gay and apparently happy around him, he notices the gambols of childhood, the sports of youth, the animating activity of mature life, and even the repose of age ; and his heart expands with universal love, and with gratitude to the Giver of all good. To such a man, the world is a perpetual feast, where dainties may be gathered on every side, arising as by enchantment from the earth. But if such be the joys of contemplation, what must be those of action ? The true philanthropist does not content himself with this luxurious benevolence, but is constantly on the watch for objects to gladden, console, or relieve. He is perpetually contributing to the happiness of those around him, in small matters as well as in great, and thinks not that good can be done only on important occasions. To few is it given to change the aspect of their country, to improve its laws, education, or prison discipline ; and to still fewer to travel, like Howard, over the wide world, in order to succour the wretched ; but all may perform innumerable acts of kindness to those who lie in their way. These small doings may not be blazoned by fame, and may not strike the imagination, but they are highly to be valued on account of the numberless opportunities for performing them. Even politeness will be cultivated on benevolent grounds, and the little interests and feelings of others meet with a due regard ; while even their weaknesses will be touched with a delicate hand. Can we doubt that such a conduct brings its own reward, and that those who learn to make others happy, share the blessedness they give ?

Sympathy is intimately associated with love, for it is impossible to desire the good of others without feeling for their weal or woe. The benevolent man “rejoices with them that do rejoice, and weeps with them that weep.” In the first case, he has a manifest advantage over the selfish and hard-hearted, possessing a world of enjoyment to which the latter is a stranger; for, wherever the human race exists and flourishes, there wells out for him<sup>5</sup> a spring of happiness. His spirit seems not confined within the narrow limits of personal identity, but ranges abroad, and communicates with the souls of countless millions. By sharing in the blessedness of others his very being appears to be expanded, and to approach more nearly to that divine original in whose image man was first created.

But he who rejoices with his fellow creatures must also weep with them; and hence it may be thought by some that the pains balance the pleasures. This, however, would be a great mistake; for joyful sympathy is without alloy, and even mournful sympathy or pity has generally more of satisfaction than of sorrow. The tear that falls for another’s woe is not of unmingled bitterness. The first feeling in pity is pain for the sufferings of another; the second, a desire to relieve those sufferings; the union of which constitutes the emotion, pity or compassion, that properly comprehends these two elements and no more. But, subsequent to them, another feeling is apt to arise, a feeling of satisfaction and self-com-

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<sup>5</sup> “Wells out”—*Spenser*.

placency proceeding from the consciousness of our being susceptible of so amiable an emotion. Again, this agreeable impression is often followed by another, which results from comparing our own situation with that of him whom we compassionate ; for we are always pleased at being made sensible of our own superiority.<sup>6</sup> Thus the first element of pity is alone painful, the second doubtful, while the two subsequent feelings are decidedly of an agreeable nature ; so that, upon the whole, we can have little doubt that the gratification generally exceeds the annoyance. But add to this the activity to which the desire of relieving suffering gives birth, and the pleasure derived from actually relieving it, and any remaining doubt must be dispelled. Thus pity, with the consequences thereof, is a blessing even to him who feels it ; while to those towards whom it is shown, it is the sweetest gift of heaven.

Persons, indeed, there are of morbid sensibility, who feel so deeply for others that they fly from every sight of woe, and, from excess of feeling, act as if they had none. These being unable to resist the first impression, know only the wounds of compassion, without its healing balm. Where such timid conduct is pursued, it may often, however, be doubted whether more be really felt, since the habit of yielding to impulse, and the want of self-command, along with common sensibility, would lead to a similar course.

The principal drawback to benevolence arises out

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<sup>6</sup> Upon this subject, the reader will do well to consult Bishop Butler's two admirable Sermons on Compassion.



of its very universality, for what is felt for all can be felt but little for each. It is grand, comprehensive, and beneficent, but weak. It is also too vague an affection to stand instead of others; for without some definite objects to rest upon, the social tendencies of man would often fly wide of the mark. For most men, it is absolutely necessary to have some persons or classes of persons toward whom they feel peculiarly bound, for without such, the firmest well-wishers of mankind might waste much time in searching for fit objects, and many, it is to be feared, would never make the search. And this, be it remarked, is necessary as well for the happiness of those who love as of those who are loved. Few, very few, find their hearts sufficiently filled by general benevolence alone. Now and then, indeed, we see a remarkable instance to the contrary, such as the philanthropic Howard, who, in his latter years, was almost wholly engrossed by benevolence; but, without some more limited ties, the immense mass of mankind cannot be fully happy. When they have them not, they hasten to form them; and in the want of human beings, they will fix their affections on animals, whether dogs, cats, parrots, or cockatoos. Nothing, in short, which lives is so insignificant that it may not be an object of love. I once knew a gardener so fond of toads that he used to keep them in his bosom. Let us then encourage universal benevolence as much as we possibly can, but let us not suppose that it can be made to replace other and closer ties.

II. Having thus considered love in its most general form, we may descend to the particular affections,

and especially to that passion which lords it over all the rest. In the first place, it is necessary to remark one important addition which the emotion in question receives, when individuals are its object; which addition is common to every variety of private attachment. General benevolence, as has been shown, consists of but two essential elements: 1. A pleasure derived either from the presence of its objects, or from thinking upon them; and 2. A desire of their good. These also are found in every private affection, but along with them co-exists another feeling, the desire of being loved in return. Whoever loves another wishes to possess his affections, nay, often to monopolize them. This, as we shall find, makes an essential difference between general and individual ties, not only in the nature of the compound feeling, but also in its consequences. The desire which forms an element of general benevolence belongs to the social class, but the desire of securing the affections of others for ourselves cannot be ranked under the same category. It evidently belongs to the self-regarding class; and by it, therefore, self enters into love, which before was a purely social affection. This is a most important circumstance, for it serves to explain many particularities which otherwise could not be accounted for. It explains, for instance, the origin of jealousy, which, like the shadow to the substance, attaches to every modification of individual love, and grows with the form that casts it; for the greater the love the darker can be the jealousy. Because jealousy is more marked in the case of love between the sexes, it may

sometimes have been thought confined to it; but this is quite a mistake, since every private attachment is subject to the same unhappy passion. Only, as no love can be compared with that between man and woman in intensity, so no jealousy can come near that of distrustful lovers.

Jealousy, of whatever kind, comprehends two elements : 1. A fear of being deprived by another of something which we consider ours by right : 2. A feeling of ill-will towards the person who is the cause of the injury. Thus, fear, and a malevolent desire, are the essential elements of the passion. Now, in every private love, what we fear to lose is the affections of an individual which we look upon as our own. From this it is evident, that it is through the self-regarding desire that jealousy enters into love. So long as the social alone prevails, there can be no occasion for jealousy.

In every variety of private attachment, we have thus discovered three elements ; but Love, properly so called, comprehends yet another. To the pleasure derived from beholding or thinking on the object, to the wish for its good, and to the wish for its affections, must now be added another desire of a nature so powerful, that the word *desire* is sometimes used to signify this alone. As by the third element, self entered into every particular love, so by the fourth, sense now enters also. By this last element, sexual love is distinguished from every other species or variety.

Thus, at last, we have a feeling of a very mixed nature, comprising, at least, four simple feelings, all

different from each other, but still agreeing in this, that each is full of pleasure. To form this delightful compound, nature has culled from various herbs and flowers their most luscious and intoxicating essences. Emotion and sense, the social and the selfish, the affections and the imagination, the refined and the voluptuous, all unite to compose and season this enchanted mixture. Here all the tenderness of our soul, all our social longings, all our selfish and sensual propensities, are poured in one cup. We quaff the potion, and instantly our desires are concentrated in one object, for whom alone we think, feel, move, and live. *Quid nisi in unitate acquiescat unus?* Ah, happy love ! happy, if it would but last ! This concentration of feeling is beautifully expressed by Shakespeare :

O, she that hath a heart of that fine frame,  
To pay this debt of love but to a brother,  
How will she love, when the rich golden shaft  
Hath kill'd the flock of all affections else  
That live in her ! When liver, brain, and heart,  
These sovereign thrones, are all supplied and fill'd  
(Her sweet perfections) with one self king !<sup>8</sup>

This is unquestionably the most violent and the most engrossing of all the passions, and if unsatisfied, it may be very permanent, ending only with life. Religious enthusiasm seems to come next to it in intensity. Though all the passions may occasionally occupy the whole man, yet these two have a greater tendency to do so, as is proved by their effects ; for none else can so upset the mind or body. The differ-

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<sup>8</sup> Twelfth-night, Act i.

ence between them is seen in this, that unsatisfied love peculiarly affects the body, while religious enthusiasm chiefly preys upon the mind. To die of love is by no means an unexampled occurrence; and instances of religious madness are frequent. The sensual desire which forms a part of love, readily explains the peculiar way in which it acts; for though people kill themselves for love, or pine away from it till they die, they do not often run mad on that account.<sup>9</sup> Unless we except intense and unexpected joy, no emotion has such an effect on the bodily health as love. Shakespeare, in a celebrated passage, has beautifully expressed the effects of a hopeless passion :

“ She never told her love,  
But let concealment, like a worm i’ the bud,  
Feed on her damask cheek : she pined in thought ;  
And, with a green and yellow melancholy,  
She sat like patience on a monument,  
Smiling at grief.”<sup>10</sup>

Nothing can show more clearly the engrossing

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<sup>9</sup> Instances of suicide from thwarted love are less common in England than in France; but, in the latter country, they occur every now and then. Sometimes both parties kill themselves by common consent. Lately, a couple, both married, but not to each other, threw themselves into the Canal St. Martin. In Roman history we read of a parricide, that of Lucius Ostius, from thwarted love.

<sup>10</sup> Twelfth-night, Act ii. People are said to have died from gazing constantly, even upon statues, as the maid of France mentioned in Milman’s beautiful poem, who fell in love with the Apollo Belvidere; and the Spanish youth who, in St. Peter’s at Rome, was smitten with a naked figure, which, out of compassion to others, has since been robed in bronze.

nature of love than its effect in blinding the judgment, and even setting at nought the evidence of the senses. It may so overpower the whole man that he cannot understand, feel, or even see like any one else.

“The lover all as frantic  
Sees Helen’s beauty in a brow of Egypt ;”

so completely is the object of his affections metamorphosed by fancy. This delusion is, no doubt, exceedingly blissful while it lasts ; and could it be continued, nothing would be wanting to happiness. For love, which, at one time, is the most turbulent of affections, is, at another, the most calming. In the former stage, it is full of the most violent perturbations, of boisterous hopes and fears succeeding with marvellous rapidity, so as to make the mind one whirlwind ; in the latter, where all fear is at an end, it becomes the most full and perfect satisfaction of which our nature can admit. Love that ends well is like a mountain way, animating, sublime, but terrific, conducting us through awful chasms, and along the edge of lofty precipices, till at last it brings us to a valley happy as that of Abyssinia.

This passion has long been a fruitful theme for poets and novelists, who have thrown around it every charm which incident or language could bestow ; well knowing that no subject can possibly be found more interesting. Assuredly these writers would not have dwelt so much upon love, had they not been aware that the chord once struck would meet with a response in every bosom, and that no other music is so truly grateful to the soul. But, however much

they may have laboured to embellish the strain, they could not surpass that original harmony of which theirs was but a copy. Love has really existed upon earth fully as intense and profound as ever poets could feign; and living Hamlets and Othellos have trod the stage of the world. These words of Othello, looking towards Desdemona, express no fanciful affection:

Excellent wretch ! Perdition catch my soul,  
But I do love thee ! and when I love thee not,  
Chaos is come again.<sup>11</sup>

Hamlet says to Laertes, who had been boasting of his fraternal love :

*I* loved Ophelia ; forty thousand brothers  
Could not with all *their* quantity of love  
Make up *my* sum.<sup>12</sup>

These lines serve to illustrate the excessive fervour of the affection. The following show the full and perfect satisfaction which attends it.

Othello to Desdemona on first meeting with her after their separation at sea :

O my soul's joy !  
If after every tempest come such calms,  
May the winds blow till they have waken'd death !  
————— If it were now to die,  
'Twere now to be most happy ; for, I fear,  
My soul hath her content so absolute,  
That not another comfort like to this  
Succeeds in unknown fate.—  
I cannot speak enough of this content,

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<sup>11</sup> Act iii.

<sup>12</sup> Act v.

It stops me here ; it is too much of joy.  
And this, and this, the greatest discords be,  
[*Kissing her.*]

That e'er our hearts shall make ! <sup>13</sup>

If there be anything else on earth capable of giving this inexpressible contentment, it is religion. When in this state, the mind of the lover is so filled with delight that he feels no wants, no desires of any kind; and is proof against numberless annoyances which otherwise might disturb his peace. He abandons himself to enjoyment without alloy, and tastes on earth the blessedness of Heaven. To constitute that heaven, duration alone is wanting, at least to our conceptions, for imagination can picture no happiness greater than that of successful love.

2. Though the passion of love seems always to comprehend the four elements above-mentioned, yet it may present a considerable variety of appearances according to the proportion in which these elements are mixed ; and this difference of proportion will sufficiently account for all the modifications it may assume, without supposing any other change in the component parts. Thus, in one man, the sensual desire may be the strongest, in a second, the wish for the affections ; while in a third, the social desire may predominate ; and whatever be the ruling desire, since it may exceed the others in a greater or less degree, the compound can thus be infinitely diversified. This will account for the doubt which we sometimes hear expressed, whether such a person be

13 Act ii.



or be not susceptible of real love ; for those who have very elevated and refined ideas of the affection, are unwilling to believe that it ever can be felt by the grossly sensual. Nor can it, exactly in their sense of the word ; for what these last experience, though composed of the very same elements, differs so widely in the proportions, that it might almost pass for a separate species ; but in truth it is only a variety. So long as the four elements are found at all, we may say that love exists ; but if any be utterly wanting, we must adopt another term. Thus *lust* is specifically distinguished from love.

The most constant variety to be met with is that between man's and woman's love. We have before remarked that women are more refined than men, and we should therefore suppose that this difference in character would show itself particularly in that passion, so important to the female heart. It has been observed by Madame de Stäel, that love which forms but an episode in the life of man, often occupies a great part of woman's. Women are undoubtedly more constant than men, and not only are less given to change the object of their affections, but they can feel warmly for a much longer time. This, in all probability, depends upon a difference in the nature of their love, and especially upon this, that the sensual desire is comparatively weak in them, while the social is not only relatively but absolutely stronger than in men. Sometimes the wish for the happiness of the object, and sometimes the wish for its affections may be the predominant feeling, but sense is rarely supreme. And as those refined in-

clinations are commonly more lasting than the gross, we need not be surprised that the love in which they prevail should better stand the test of time.

But, whatever may be thought of this explanation, the fact, I conceive, is certain, that female love is peculiarly constant, durable, refined, and self-denying, willing to make the greatest sacrifices for the sake of the happiness of another. It is retiring, tender, beneficent, and confiding, rather than passionate; though on fit occasions it can display the greatest energy.

In the very enthusiasm of love, Juliet is made to say :

Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face ;  
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek  
For that which thou hast heard me speak to night.

Soon after she says :

In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond ;  
And therefore thou may'st think my 'haviour light :  
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true  
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.

What a picture of enthusiastic attachment have we in the following lines :

My bounty is as boundless as the sea,  
My love as deep ; the more I give to thee,  
The more I have, for both are infinite.

And of devotedness in these :

If that thy bent of love be honourable,  
Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow.  
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Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite ;  
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay,  
And follow thee, my lord, throughout the world.

The scene closes thus :

Good night, good night ! parting is such sweet sorrow,  
That I shall say—good night, till it be morrow.<sup>14</sup>

The character of Helena presents us with an instance of love, at once the most ardent, constant, and self-denying :

I know I love in vain, strive against hope ;  
Yet, in this captious and intenible sieve  
I still pour in the waters of my love,  
And lack not to lose still.<sup>15</sup>

Upon receiving the letter from Bertram announcing his flight from France and from her, she says :

*Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France.*  
Nothing in France, until he has no wife !  
Thou shalt have none, Rousillon, none in France,  
Then hast thou all again. Poor lord ! is't I  
That chase thee from thy country, and expose  
Those tender limbs of thine to the event  
Of the none-sparing war ?

And she ends by giving up all for his happiness :

I will be gone :  
My being here it is that holds thee hence :  
Shall I stay here to do't ? no, no, although  
The air of Paradise did fan the house,  
And angels offic'd all. I will be gone !  
That pitiful rumour may report my flight,  
To console thine ear.<sup>16</sup>

So deep-seated was the affection of Desdemona, that not all the cruelty of her husband could expel it :

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<sup>14</sup> Act ii.

<sup>15</sup> All's well that ends well, Act i.

<sup>16</sup> Act iii.

*Emilia.* I would you had never seen him !

*Des.* So would not I ; my love doth so approve him,  
That even his stubbornness, his checks, and frowns,—  
————— have grace and favour in them.<sup>17</sup>

In Imogen we see a striking example of the energy of female love. Upon receiving the letter from her husband, Posthumus, informing her of his arrival at Milford-Haven, she says :

O, for a horse with wings !—Hear'st thou Pisanio,  
He is at Milford-Haven. Read, and tell me  
How far 'tis thither. If one of mean affairs  
May plod it in a week, why may not I  
Glide thither in a day ? —————

Pr'ythee, speak,  
How many score of miles may we well ride  
'Twixt hour and hour ?

*Pisanio.* One score, 'twixt sun and sun,  
Madam's enough for you ; and too much too.

*Imogen.* Why, one that rode to his execution, man,  
Could never go so slow.

In Portia, we behold love, dignified, pliant, confiding, and disinterested ; all which qualities are marked in her famous speech, beginning with

You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,  
Such as I am.

But the passage is too long for insertion.

I may conclude these quotations illustrative of female love, by one from the Second Book of Samuel :  
“ I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan : very pleasant hast thou been unto me : thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.”<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Othello, Act iv.

<sup>18</sup> 2 Samuel, i. 26.

In Europe, during the middle ages, there grew up a singular passion for the fair sex, half real, half affected. Every chivalrous knight considered it quite as indispensable to have a favoured lady in his eye, as to possess a horse and armour; and in the want of a real flame, he was bound at least to feign one. There can be no doubt that this practice had an exceedingly civilising influence, and not only tempered the rude manners of that age, but has left a lasting effect on modern society, where women hold a more important rank, and are treated with more respect and deference than amongst the most polished nations of antiquity. Before a knight could pretend to any favours from his fair one, he was obliged to distinguish himself in some bold adventure; and thus his love was stimulated by difficulty, fed by hope, yet unsatiated by possession. Spenser, in the "Faery Queene," even represents the lovely Una and the red-cross Knight as travelling together with no attendants but a squire and a dwarf, without either thought of ill, or loss of reputation; and though this may be a poetical exaggeration, yet it serves to show what was thought possible, and how high a conception of virtue was formed by the code of chivalry. When we consider that, at the present day, there are countries in which a young woman may not be seen walking with a young man in the open streets, and where even a brother is not thought a fit protector, we shall be conscious how different an idea can be entertained as to the purity of either sex.

Under the warm and poetical sky of Italy, this passion for the fair sometimes melted into a fanciful,

dreamy, sentimental affection, such as we see depicted by the early poets of that country, particularly Dante and Petrarch. Though Petrarch be most celebrated for this kind of love, yet his was by no means a singular case, for Dante and others partook of the same ; and if the one had his Laura, the other had his Beatrice. The lyrical poems of Dante are less known in this country than the “*Divina Commedia*,” but in them we find a strain very similar to that of Petrarch.<sup>18</sup> Many laugh at this visionary passion, that rather shunned than sought its object, lest reality should dissipate the charm ; that dwelt with Petrarch in Italy while his idol was beyond the Alps, and which vented itself only in odes and sonnets to Laura, living or dead ; but such a feeling, though possible to few, is still within the limits of nature. Supposing it to exist, it certainly would be highly delightful. If we felt not the vehement wishes and raptures of a more earthly love, neither should we feel its disappointments ; but, instead of these, a soft desire and a pleasing melancholy would constantly fill the soul. Whoever has known such a state would probably be unwilling to change it for aught that this world can bestow.

Per alti monti, e per selve aspre trovo  
 Qualche riposo, ogni abitato loco  
 E nimico mortal degli occhi miei.  
 A ciascun passo nasce un pensier novo  
 Della mia donna, che sovente in gioco  
 Gira 'l tormento ch' i' porto per lei ;

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<sup>18</sup> The English reader may now peruse these poems in his own language, by means of the very elegant translation of Mr. Lyell, of Kinnordy.

Ed appena vorrei  
 Cangiar questo mio viver dolce amaro.<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps the reader may excuse another quotation as illustrative of this state of mind, which, in a philosophical point of view, is really a curious phenomenon. After having given a most beautiful description of Laura as she first appeared to him, amidst a shower of flowers, Petrarch says,

Quante volte diss' io  
 Allor pien di spavento :  
 Costei per fermo nacque in Paradiso !  
 Così carico d' obbligo,  
 Il divin portamento,  
 E 'l volto, e le parole, e 'l dolce riso  
 M' aveano, e sì diviso  
 Dall' imagine vera,  
 Ch' i' dicea sospirando :  
 Qui come venn' io, o quando ?  
 Credendo esser in ciel, non là dov'era.<sup>20</sup>

3. The greatest drawback to love is Jealousy. We have already explained the nature of this passion, and shown that, while in pure benevolence it can have no place, when self is looked to, then it may spring up. Fear and a malevolent desire are its component elements ; and in the case of love, it is the affections and the exclusive possession of the person which we fear to lose. Now, the more we value these, the more must we hate any one who should attempt to deprive us of them ; and consequently, the stronger the love, the more dreadful will be the jealousy. And should we suspect that the very object of our affections may be herself in league against us, we shall then

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<sup>19</sup> Petrarca, Canzone xvii.

<sup>20</sup> Canzone xiv.

direct our hate against her, and pass from the extreme of one passion to the extreme of its opposite. These results, which may be deduced from the nature of the human mind, are amply confirmed by experience; for we know that violent love often passes into deadly hate. This effect, however, is not brought about at once; nay, within certain limits, jealousy may foster love, as is often said. Jealousy and Absence have long been thought to fan the tender flame. According to this view, jealousy, which is a consequence of love, afterwards reacts as a cause.

Supposing this to be true, on what principle can it be explained? The effects both of jealousy and absence may, I think, be accounted for from two principles of human nature, to be afterwards dwelt upon, the principle of *variety* and that of *privation*. The pains of jealousy interrupt that perfect satisfaction of love which is apt at last to pall, and make us feel more sensibly returning confidence and joy. And as we never value any thing so much as when we have actually lost it, or even fear to lose it, so the fear, which is an element of jealousy, causes us to cling to our affection with redoubled ardour. The same principles explain the effects of absence, for absence is both a *change* and a *privation*. To a certain extent, then, it is probable that jealousy does encourage love; but, when carried far, it extinguishes it altogether. When the pains which it causes become so frequent and lasting, as greatly to over-balance the pleasure derived from the intercourse, then hatred becomes the prevailing passion; and as much as we formerly loved the being who was the source of all



our delight, so much do we now detest the object which is associated chiefly with misery. Jealousy can exist only so long as there is doubt; for when doubt is at an end, there is either pure love or hate. Suspense would appear to be sometimes the most intolerable state of all :

O, beware, my lord, of jealousy;  
It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock  
The meat it feeds on : that cuckold lives in bliss,  
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;  
But O, what damned minutes tells he o'er,  
Who dotes, yet doubts; suspects, yet strongly loves !

\* \* \* \* \*

*Othello.* Think'st thou, I'd make a life of jealousy,  
To follow still the changes of the moon  
With fresh suspicions? No : to be once in doubt,  
Is—once to be resolved.

\* \* \* \* \*

No, Iago;  
I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;  
And, on the proof, there is no more but this,—  
Away at once with love, or jealousy.

So insupportable is the doubt, that a little further on, Othello seems to wish that the worst were proved to him :

Villain, be sure thou prove my love a — ;  
Be sure of it ; give me the ocular proof;  
[ *Taking him by the throat.*  
Or, by the worth of mine eternal soul,  
Thou hadst been better have been born a dog,  
Than answer my waked wrath.

\* \* \* \* \*

Make me to see it ; or, (at the least) so prove it,  
That the probation bear no hinge nor loop,  
To hang a doubt on : or, woe upon thy life !

Even when jealousy is at an end, and hate becomes the predominant passion, love still enters at times; for an affection once strong cannot be utterly destroyed in a moment, even by the proof of unfaithfulness. The mind, like the body, is very liable to relapses, and easily falls back into a train of thought or feeling which once was habitual. Thus, in the intervals of hate, love will still recur, as may be illustrated from Othello, who, just before putting his deadly purpose in execution, thus speaks :

Yet, I'll not shed her blood ;  
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,  
And smooth as monumental alabaster.

\* \* \* \* \*

When I have pluck'd thy rose,  
I cannot give it vital growth again,  
It needs must wither :—I'll smell it on the tree.—

[*Kissing her.*]

O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade  
Justice to break her sword !—One more, one more.—  
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,  
And love thee after ;—One more, and this the last :  
So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,  
But they are cruel tears : This sorrow's heavenly ;  
It strikes, where it doth love.—She wakes—<sup>21</sup>

A writer less acquainted with human nature would, probably, never have thought of putting such words into the mouth of one who was about to do a deed of hate ; but we feel them to be perfectly suitable to the former depth of the Moor's affection, which was suddenly recalled by the prospect of its object being speedily severed from him for ever.

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<sup>21</sup> Act v.

Since love is the cause of jealousy, it might be supposed that, when the cause has ceased, the effect must terminate along with it: but such is not always the case; and for this reason, that love is not the only cause of this evil passion. An excess of jealousy puts an end to love; but jealousy may still survive; for what began from affection may be continued from vanity:<sup>22</sup> and this occurs the more readily on the principle of custom, as, every day, we see that opinions, feelings, and practices long out-live the causes that first gave rise to them. Thus, even when the original cause has ceased, many incidents, in themselves insignificant, may rouse the jealousy of one who had long been used to such a feeling. The only difference will be, that vanity, not love, will now take the alarm; for a blow that cannot reach the heart, may wound our self-complacency.

Original conformation of mind, and particular circumstances, may greatly favour jealousy. Some minds are particularly prone to this passion; and it would be difficult to imagine any more unfavourable to happiness. Not only is it a perpetual thorn in the breast of him who harbours it, which irritates and may kill the sweet and delicate plant of love; but it also inflicts a wound in its innocent object, and a wound that may be fatal. He who is constantly exposed to unjust suspicion, must at last be alienated

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<sup>22</sup> “ La jalousie naît toujours avec l’amour, mais elle ne meurt pas toujours avec lui.” *Roche foucauld, Max.* 383.

“ Il y a dans la jalousie plus d’amour—propre que d’amour.” *Id.* 331.

from one who is the cause of so much annoyance. No love, however deep, can resist these incessant attacks ; as no stone, however hard, can withstand a perpetual dropping. Nay, more, unjust suspicion is apt to lead to that which is well founded. When a man knows that whatever he do, he cannot escape censure, he at last comes to think, that he may as well give real cause. This may be accounted for in the following way : First, the constant suspicion of harm puts an idea into his head which otherwise might never have occurred ; and this idea once fairly in, is not so easily got out. It is often very dangerous to suggest an evil, though to warn against it. Secondly, the frequent irritation caused by the jealous temper of his partner, and the low opinion she has of him, both create a malicious feeling towards her, which prompts him to wound her in the most tender point. Thus it is that unjust jealousy gives rise to real unfaithfulness. Can there be a stronger argument against too ready suspicion ?

Besides original conformation of mind, peculiar circumstances may also favour jealousy. Such are, a great disparity in age or appearance ; the known want of affection in one of the parties, who may have married from prudential considerations, or in order to please her family ; and, we may add, light conduct before marriage, which suggests the possibility of the same afterwards ; or even any deception practised on friends and relations.

The jealousy of Othello is particularly natural, on account of the striking disparity between the young and lovely Desdemona, whose skin was “ pure as

monumental alabaster," and the swarthy Moor, who was certainly very much her senior.

*Brabantio.* And she—in spite of nature,  
Of years, of country, credit, every thing,—  
To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on? <sup>23</sup>

And although Othello says,

Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw  
The smallest fear, or doubt of her revolt ;  
For she had eyes, and chose me ; <sup>24</sup>

there can be no question that these "weak merits" render his jealousy all the more probable.

But the crowning argument with which Iago contrives to instil his poison into the mind of the Moor, is this,

She did deceive her father, marrying you ;  
And when she seem'd to shake, and fear your looks,  
She loved them most.

*Othello.* And so she did.

*Iago.* Why, go to, then ;  
She that, so young, could give out such a seeming,  
To seel <sup>25</sup> her father's eyes up, close as oak,—  
He thought, 'twas witchcraft. <sup>26</sup>

These words convey so striking a moral, and so applicable to common life, that with them I shall leave the subject of jealousy ; hoping that those persons, in particular, will ponder over them, who dare to say that Shakespeare was not a moral writer.

4. Since love is so sweet a plant, but frail and

<sup>23</sup> Act i.

<sup>24</sup> Act iii.

<sup>25</sup> An expression from falconry : to seel a hawk is to sew up his eye-lids. *Commentator.*

<sup>26</sup> Act iii.

delicate withal, liable to be nipped by outward cold, as well as consumed by its own inward and excessive heat, we must naturally wish to know how it may be kept alive. Now, in order to defend any thing from injury, we must first discover what are its principal foes. Love, then, is destroyed by two different, nay, opposite causes, *despair* and *security*; that is, by the absence of hope, or by the absence of fear, or, in other words, by the want of all probability of obtaining, or of losing the object of our affections. It has been before observed, that we cannot earnestly and long desire anything which we know to be unattainable; and this holds true of love as well as of any other desire. In reference to this one in particular, we remarked, that we scarcely ever hear of persons in the lower ranks of life falling in love with those much above them; though the converse is by no means uncommon. This shows that improbability of success, not difference of manners and ideas, is the principal obstacle to the affection. The probability may be slight, but it must exist in a degree; otherwise there can be no lasting passion. In Shakespeare's play of "All's well that ends well," we, indeed, find an inferior deeply in love with her superior; and Helena is even made to say to Bertram's mother, "I know I love in vain, strive against hope," as before quoted; but, after all, Helena was a gentlewoman, daughter of a famous physician, deceased, Gerard de Narbon, and it is evident that she really did entertain hopes, chiefly on account of a specific, left to her by her father, applicable to the illness under which the king of France was labouring.

Who ever strove  
 To show her merit, that did miss her love ?  
 The King's disease—my project may deceive me ;  
 But my intents are fix'd, and will not leave me.<sup>27</sup>

Again,

There's something hints,  
 More than my father's skill, which was the greatest  
 Of his profession, that his good receipt  
 Shall, for my legacy, be sanctified  
 By the luckiest stars in heaven.<sup>28</sup>

Nothing is more common than for people to say to others that they have no hope, and sometimes they think so themselves, while the comforter really occupies a hidden corner of the heart.

But if despair nip love in the bud, security kills it when full blown. Where there is perfect security, there is no fear, and without fear desire can hardly maintain itself. Desire and fear mutually promote each other ; for the desire of attaining an object creates a fear of its non-attainment, and this fear reacts upon the desire, and increases it, according to the principle of *privation*. So desire of preserving, gives birth to the fear of losing, and this fear again strengthens the desire. In like manner, fear of any evil rouses the wish to avoid it, and the wish keeps alive the fear. Thus, there is a constant action and re-action, and if one of the agents cease, the other must lose great part of its force. Desire left to itself without its wonted goad, is apt to resemble a sober steed when freed from the whip or spur ; for, though

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<sup>27</sup> Act i. sc. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Act i. sc. 3.

a fiery blood-horse may require neither, a hackney of less mettle will be likely to go to sleep. So a desire of uncommon vigour might live without the aid of fear, though it would almost certainly cause it; but one of less energy will gradually sink and die.

The more remote influence of security, or the absence of all fear upon love, may be thus traced. Security gives birth to *carelessness*, as to the various expedients necessary to foster passion, in self as well as in the other party; whereas, its opposite, *wakefulness*, which results from fear, keeps one constantly on the alert to notice the slightest symptom of decay, in order to apply a timely remedy.

It is safer for love to be watchful and weep,

As he used in his prime, than go smiling to sleep:

For death on his slumber, cold death follows fast,

While the love that is *wakeful* lives on to the last.<sup>29</sup>

This habit of watchfulness serves to fill the mind; and the various expedients which it suggests engage us still more, all constantly recalling, and therefore strengthening our affection according to the principle of *occupation*.

Carelessness, on the other hand, affects not only our own mind and conduct, and through them the other party, but it also acts directly on the latter; for, if a woman see that her husband allows her to go about everywhere without him, or that he expresses no anxiety at all the attentions paid to her, she will naturally suppose that this arises from want of affec-

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<sup>29</sup> Moore's National Melodies.



tion, and thus she may become estranged. Not to mention that such carelessness really exposes her to temptation. It is actually putting her in harm's way.

Fear, as we thus perceive, tends to cherish love, both immediately and remotely ; immediately, by increasing this desire, like every other, on the principle of *privation* ; remotely, through the wakefulness which it creates. Let us not then quarrel with fear, for it is the tutelary saint of love.

It is evident from the above, as well as known by general observation, that the dangers which love has to encounter are greatest after it reaches the port. The bark which bears it can withstand much better the storms of the open ocean, than the little worm that causes the dry rot. Since desire always looks to the future, it could not possibly exist along with the possession of its object, if this possession were supposed final and complete ; for it would be quenched from want of aliment, like fire when there is nothing to burn. If, then, love were so triumphant as to have achieved its point once and for ever, it must speedily be extinguished ; since desire of one kind or other forms three-fourths of love. But, scarcely in any case can love be thus satisfied in a moment, though it may speedily.

The durability of the passion will mainly depend upon its nature, that is, upon the proportions of the various elements of which it is composed. When sense forms the chief part of the compound feeling, love will not long survive possession ; because, the object, when once attained, seems attained completely and for ever. Here, there is no vague idea in pros-

pect which the imagination can picture as more brilliant than what is already known ; and consequently there is nothing to desire. If the tie be for life, as in marriage, there can seldom be much fear of losing the person, and on this account, also, desire rapidly declines. Should any such fear arise, the husband would probably be roused from indifference, and feel somewhat of his former flame.

Again, it is peculiarly the nature of sense to be soon satiated with one thing, and to pine after variety.

Lastly, beauty, which principally gives rise to sensual love, is not only fleeting, but by custom soon loses its magic. We are often astonished at the insensibility of husbands to the personal charms of their own wives. Beauty is much more for the world than for the chimney corner ; and the pursuit of it has well been described as

A chase of idle hopes and fears,  
Begun in folly, closed in tears.

\* \* \* \*

The lovely toy so fiercely sought  
Hath lost its charm by being caught ;  
For every touch that woo'd its stay  
Hath brush'd its brightest hues away.  
Till charm, and hue, and beauty gone,  
'Tis left to fly or fall alone.<sup>30</sup>

But if love be of a different nature, consisting principally in a desire for the happiness of the object, and a desire for its affections ; and if it be founded on mental more than on bodily qualities, then it may

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<sup>30</sup> Giaour.

be very lasting ; and for these reasons. As, in this case, the affections are a more important object than the person, and, as neither law nor custom can secure those, we never can feel certain that, though we possess them to-day, we shall to-morrow. Besides, they are of so delicate a nature, that a single chilly blast may grievously impair them. Hence, the affections constantly present themselves to us in futurity as an object to be attained, a conquest to be made, or at least to be preserved ; and therefore they keep up both desire and fear.

Secondly, the above affections are not nearly so liable to change their object as the sensual propensity.

And, thirdly, Mental qualities are far more durable than bodily. These reasons sufficiently account for the greater permanence of this kind of love. The author of "Gil Blas" is universally allowed to have been intimately acquainted with human nature ; so that, any anecdote taken from that novel carries in this respect a great authority along with it. We there meet with a story which shows very forcibly how strong may, in love, be the desire for the affections, even when the person is secured. The husband of the beautiful Seraphina, after a year spent in fruitless endeavours to inspire his wife with a mutual passion, set off in despair for the seat of war, in quest of that death which he soon met with on the field of battle.

But, whether love be very durable or not, it would be a great mistake to suppose that its influence on our happiness is limited to the period when it lasts. That period remains for ever in the memory as a past

but blissful reality, to prove to us of what exalted felicity our nature is susceptible, and favour the belief that what we have enjoyed once, we may enjoy again, if not here, hereafter. Strong delights need the less to be repeated, because they live in our remembrance, even until our dying day. No man who was once in love can afterwards forget it; and therefore he has within him a fountain of thought and emotion which can never dry. Even from curiosity one would wish to know such a passion; for he who knows it not, must have but an imperfect idea of human nature. The greatest of heathen philosophers is said to have discoursed so eloquently on marriage, that the single all rushed into matrimony; and we may be certain that he did not separate marriage from love. Those who rail at the emotion would do well to take a hint from Socrates.

Having shown by what causes love is blighted, we are now the better prepared to inquire how it may be cherished. As to the birth of love, we need say but little, for the great master of human nature informs us on this point:

Tell me, where is fancy bred,  
Or in the heart, or in the head,  
How begot, how nourished?  
It is engender'd in the eyes,  
With gazing fed.

Let those who wish to nurse or cure a passion attend to this.

Though love at first sight be not unfrequently laughed at, it is far from unnatural. Nay, it would seem that, in most cases where the feeling is very

strong, a decided impression had been produced at the first, which has afterwards been increased by time and intercourse. The strongest cases of love occur between those who never met till they were grown up; for the affection which exists between parties who have known each other from infancy is of a much tamer nature, and more allied to friendship. It is the same with the beauties of nature or of art. Nothing so much deadens sensibility as to become familiarized with any object before we can appreciate its perfections; and therefore, we are more struck with the charms of foreign countries than of our own. In the former case, a strong impression is produced at once, because we do not see them until our faculties are fully developed; while, in the latter, custom has blunted our feelings prematurely. On the same principle, the strongest love is that which begins at the first interview.

Shakespeare, at all events, believed in love at first sight; for Romeo becomes enamoured of Juliet the moment he beholds her at the ball.

*Romeo.* What lady's that which doth enrich the hand  
Of yonder knight?

*Servant.* I know not, Sir.

*Romeo.* O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!

Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night,

Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear:

Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!

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Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight!

For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Act. i. sc. 5.

So, likewise, the duke in Twelfth Night says ;

O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first,  
Methought, she purged the air of pestilence ;  
That instant was I turn'd into a hart ;  
And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,  
E'er since pursue me.<sup>32</sup>

Since love is born and fed by gazing on its object when present, and thinking on it when absent, the obvious cure is not to gaze and not to think. The first of these is much easier than the second, for we can always keep our person aloof, though we may not be able to prevent our thoughts from dwelling on an interesting subject. It is, however, a great mistake to suppose that love, or any other passion, is purely involuntary ; the first movement undoubtedly is so, but afterwards it may be encouraged or discouraged at will. We cannot, indeed, directly will away any idea that besets us ; nay, the more we desire its absence, the more pertinaciously does it cling to us, because the desire constantly suggests the idea ; but, we can turn our attention to something else, we can seek amusement or business, violent bodily exercise, or, above all, travel, which is so well calculated to change the current of our ideas. Flight is the best cure for the wounds of Cupid.

In nothing do men differ more than in the comparative facility of transferring thoughts. Some have as great difficulty in retaining, as others in getting rid of their ideas ; and the same holds true of the emotions, which greatly depend upon the former.

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<sup>32</sup> Act. i. sc. 1.

Those who are tenacious of thought will be likewise tenacious of passion ; they will be ardent, or, at least, constant in love, business, or study, and therefore they will be likely to push discoveries in science further than more volatile natures ; as well as to reach the pinnacle of their wishes, whether in the way of fame, power, wealth, or knowledge ; but these great advantages are not entirely gratuitous. Men of this stamp are apt to be overwhelmed with passion or with grief, domineered by habit, fatigued with the sameness of their thoughts ; and they are even more liable to insanity than other people. To such characters, amusement is particularly valuable, as tending to dissipate for a while their prevailing ideas, and give freshness and elasticity to the mental faculties. What would be injurious to more volatile natures by driving away all serious reflection, is an unmingled good to them. I have known persons of this sort who never engaged in their occupations with such alacrity and success, as after having spent great part of the previous night in a scene of diversion ; for such a scene was sufficient to animate, but not permanently to distract their minds. It unfortunately happens that where there is an evil, we are generally averse to the remedy, because the remedy is opposed to our own bent. Thus, the above class have constantly to struggle against habit, which urges them to go on in the same course, while they ought to do just the contrary ; and though they may relish amusement, and though it may do them good, they are not much inclined to seek it.

Having peeped at Love in his cradle, we must now witness his future growth.

We have seen that the principal foes of love are *despair* and *security*. Now, when we consider what is common to these two, we shall find that in spite of their opposition, they agree in one point; for *certainty* belongs to both. In the one case there is felt a certainty of not obtaining, in the other of not losing. Hence we are brought to the conclusion, that the grand promoter of love is *uncertainty*. This it is which keeps up hope as well as fear, both of which we have found necessary to love. It is self-evident that the certainty of not attaining any thing does away with hope, and the certainty of obtaining or of not losing, destroys fear; but it is not so obvious that the certainty of attaining also abates hope, and the certainty of not obtaining or of losing dispels fear. Such, however, seems to be the case. When we are quite sure of getting any thing, our desire for it speedily declines, and when we are sure of the contrary, so does our fear. The final cause of this is manifest, for desire and fear being intended for action, for conquering obstacles and avoiding danger, when there are no longer any obstacles or any danger, or none that can be conquered or avoided, these passions are useless. They were meant to cease when no more required.

In considering the proximate cause of the phenomenon, we shall find a further exemplification of the truth of the principle above stated, that desire and fear mutually promote each other, and that they cannot long exist apart. When we are sure of obtaining any good, we can have no fear, and for that very reason we almost cease to desire. So, when we are



certain of not escaping any evil, we soon give over desiring its absence, according to the principle that we cannot long wish for what is unattainable; and because we desire no more, we fear no more.

The effect of certainty upon fear may be seen in cases of extreme danger, such as occur at sea, or on a field of battle. Persons, who, when the danger was slight, were in a dreadful state of alarm, sometimes become quite calm when death seems close at hand. When pestilence stalks over a land, the inhabitants are smitten with terror; but no sooner is one really attacked, than fear declines or ceases. In illness, so long as there is hope, so long is there fear; but when the sick man is certain of his approaching end, he becomes very sorrowful or else resigned, but he is not afraid, unless it be of a judgment to come. It may be thought an objection to the above view that men fear death, though they know it to be inevitable; but the final event alone is certain, the time uncertain, and this uncertainty as to time keeps up the desire of long life, and hence the fear of losing it prematurely; for what death-doomed criminal ever less rejoiced in a reprieve, because it might be but temporary?

Desire and fear being those emotions which chiefly agitate the mind, the calmness which follows their absence is easily accounted for. This calmness may not exclude all emotion, but it must be of a milder nature.

It is evident from the above that uncertainty is the grand promoter of every passion, and of love in particular. Women, generally speaking, have a secret

instinct of this, for they like to keep their admirers long in suspense, and are brought with difficulty to an explicit declaration. Poets from force of imagination, and women from delicacy of feeling, sometimes see further into human nature than philosophers. Though they cannot state their conclusions in set terms, and reason them out, they still are conscious of them ; and they certainly are less liable to gross mistakes than mere mathematical thinkers who suppose that the mind of man, like an algebraic equation, contains but one or two unknown quantities, to be discovered by the intellect alone. Guided by their delicacy of feeling, women rather like to plague their lovers, and keep up a degree of doubt ; well knowing that their empire hangs upon the thread of uncertainty. The moment that thread is cut, joy fills the soul ; but afterwards love is apt to cool. When the chase of hopes and fears is at an end, then is the time of trial ; for the little God, who was kept awake by the storm, may fall asleep in the calm.

Another great promoter of love is *difficulty*. Difficulty is allied to uncertainty, for where there are obstacles, there must be some doubt ; but there is sufficient difference between them to require a separate notice.

Ah me ! for aught that ever I could read,  
Could ever hear by tale or history,  
The course of true love never did run smooth.<sup>33</sup>

And this want of smoothness was one cause of its being true.

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<sup>33</sup> Midsummer-night's Dream. Act i. sc. 1.

Obstacles tend to increase any passion before as well as after the attainment of its object.

In the first case, obstacles tend perpetually to keep that object in our mind ; for where there is some impediment to be removed by our own exertions, we will constantly be forming schemes or putting them in practice for that purpose. This effect, then, of difficulty, depends upon the principle of *occupation*.

While the mind is devising plans and pursuing them, it must be occupied about the object of those plans, and not only will the intellect be thus engaged, but the emotions will be kept in a constant agitation by a succession of secondary hopes and fears, according as our projects promise well or ill. Now, all this activity, both of intellect and feeling, must tend to fix as well as strengthen the primary passion.

When difficulties are thrown in our way designedly by others, then some additional principles are called into action ; for our pride receives a wound. Partly from a desire to get rid of this pain of humility, partly from revenge, or desire of giving pain to those who both oppose our design and wound our pride, we pursue our original purpose with increased energy. These principles are the source of the marriages from pique, or *mariages de vengeance*, which occur now and then in the world as well as in the realms of fiction. In *Gil Blas*, for instance, there is a famous story of this kind.<sup>34</sup> With some, to forbid any thing is the way to secure its being done.

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<sup>34</sup> I have in my eye at this moment a remarkable instance in real life. An Englishman of noble family being prevented by

But difficulties not only stimulate our desires previous to the attainment of their object, but they make us value and love it more when within our grasp. To this tend both reason and feeling; for we are apt to think that what has cost us much trouble must be really precious; and we are loth to believe that we have laboured or made any sacrifice in vain. The pain which attends the idea of efforts thrown away, is the cause of this slowness of belief. We thus explain the peculiar attachment of some authors to their second-rate productions. It is natural to conclude, that what cost them most toil must be the most valuable; humiliating to think that when they exerted themselves in the greatest degree, they were the least successful; painful to suppose that their time has been thrown away; and therefore they will have it that their most laboured works are the best. Sometimes, however, authors are partial to those writings in which they took the greatest interest, and this is probably a safer ground of preference; for, what is done *con amore* is likely to be done well.

If it be true, as somewhere said, I think in the Spectator, that the happiest marriages are those which have been preceded by the longest courtships, this may be accounted for partly on the above principle. The time and pains which it has cost us to possess the beloved object enhance its value in our eyes, and make us cling to it with pertinacity. To

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his friends from marrying the object of his choice, he said that, in that case, he would "e'en take Sally the housemaid." And so he did.

throw away or neglect, now that we have got it, is to render vain all our past sacrifices. Another cause is the better acquaintance with each other's character, which a long courtship may afford. If affection stand the test of this intimate acquaintance before marriage, it probably will after, and if not, the match is broken off. These causes render it probable that long courtships are favourable to happy marriages.

As a familiar instance of the effect of *facility* on our desires, we may mention the well-known circumstance that those who live in a place are the last to see its sights. Many have been over half Europe before they knew the beauties of their own country, or even of their own neighbourhood ; for curiosity is deadened by the ease with which it may be gratified. The same holds true of that curiosity which leads to other knowledge. To a certain extent ardour in study increases with our interruptions ; and, when sure of our time, we are apt to become lukewarm. This is one reason why, even among the literary, those who have most leisure are not always the most studious ; and why others, with a fixed employment, sometimes do more in their hours of recreation, than the former in their whole lives. Knowing that their opportunities are short, they labour with exceeding energy. Those who retire to the country in order to have all their time at command, free from visits of friendship or of ceremony, often do less than before, for they fall asleep amongst their books.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Not long ago, meeting a celebrated French author, lately returned to Paris after spending many months in the country, I

The effects of difficulty, however, are two-fold. Up to a certain point, it sharpens our desires ; but beyond that, it blunts and destroys them. The particular point at which the reverse effect will begin must depend upon the original force of the desire : and the same obstacle which might deaden a weak desire would stimulate a strong one. When difficulty becomes impossibility, the firmest passion will die away. This may be illustrated by the love of play. It is vain to suppose, that those who have acquired a strong passion for gaming will be prevented from indulging it in secret by the fear of fine or imprisonment ; but hundreds who have either no liking as yet, or but a feeble one, may be stopped by a timely obstacle. In the former case, difficulty will but increase the propensity, in the latter it may hinder this from springing up at all, or blast it in the very bud. Facility gives opportunity at least, and so suggests an idea which to the many might never have occurred ; and therefore it tends to render a taste more general though less strong. On this ground there can be no doubt that the measure lately adopted of putting down the public and licensed gaming-houses in Paris will produce the most happy effects. It will not slake the thirst for play in all bosoms, but it will prevent or quench this in many, and narrow the sphere of its ravages.

A curious exemplification of the influence of facility on our desires may be seen in the case of public

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said to him, “ You must have had plenty of time for study ”—*J'en avais trop*, was his answer, *Je devins engourdi*.

marks of honour. It might have been thought that the great number of ribbons and crosses distributed by the French government under the Restoration would have rendered them of no value, and that people would have ceased to demand them; but the effect was just the contrary. The facility with which they were obtained probably weakened the desire in a few, but spread it among many. People who saw their equals with an order at their button hole, thought they might get one too, and if not, that they would be considered below the others; so that ribbons came to be sought less to mark superiority than to avoid inferiority. A saying of Cardinal Mazarine deserves here to be recorded as founded on a similar view of human nature. When apprehensive of losing his power, he said, "*Je ferai tant de ducs qu'il sera honteux de l'être, et honteux de ne l'être pas :*" for, dukedoms becoming so common, people would be almost ashamed of so paltry a distinction, and yet they would feel ashamed not to possess that which others enjoyed whom they thought no better than themselves. If kings or ambassadors became too promiscuous in their parties and receptions, the great would pretend to be ashamed of being seen in company with such a rabble; but, at the same time, they would be more ashamed to be left out.

We have seen that some interruption is favourable to ardour in study; but too long and frequent, damps and puts it out. The periods during which we can apply being so short, or so far removed, we at last begin to think it not worth while to make the attempt, and so either seek for fresh amusement to fill up the

vacant hour, or pass it in an indolent manner. Our desires may be stifled by too little as well as by too much food. Every passion may be surfeited, but every one must be fed. Without some aliment, desire can seldom live long, but flickers and is finally extinguished; while, with too much, it becomes feeble as the light of a wick overloaded with tallow or wax. Those numerous slaves who people the harem of an eastern despot must be enough to cloy the most eager appetite; but in the total absence of women's society, desire would die away altogether. Here, then, as well as in the bodily frame, over-repletion is less fatal than inanition. The boa constrictor having gorged itself with food, and remained torpid for a season, at length resumes activity, but what can rouse it from the sleep of famine? Many are the rich who suffer from excess and luxury, but how few as compared with the poor who perish from want and starvation!<sup>36</sup> As bodily health is best maintained by temperance, that is, by a due medium between too much and too little sustenance, so the passions are perpetuated by a course of life removed from the extremes of abstinence and indulgence.

We are probably but little aware, how much our enjoyment depends upon difficulty and uncertainty. There can scarcely be any sport without them. In every kind of game, play, or exercise of address, our

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<sup>36</sup> See the fearful accounts lately published of the famine which has been desolating the province of Agra in India. This, too, is only one out of several calamities of the sort which have afflicted Hindostan since the British first settled there. (1839.)



pleasure nearly ceases as soon as we are sure of success. The interest of all games of chance evidently depends much upon uncertainty, and so it is with those of skill. When the young sportsman brings down his first bird, he is beyond measure delighted, because he expected to miss, and he continues for a long time to enjoy the diversion extremely, till by constant practice, he becomes a dead shot. Then his pleasure at hitting is very much diminished; but should he ever miss, his pain is as greatly augmented, for now he expects to hit. The chief object with him now is not delight in killing, but the glory of having slaughtered his hundreds; for love of superiority takes this turn, and is gratified with having it trumpeted about in the newspapers that he has slain so many brace in a day. So, the young author feels intensely the first praise, partly because it is the first, partly because of the previous uncertainty; but as he advances in writing and in honour, he gradually comes to expect applause, and therefore cares for it less, though he is sadly wounded by the contrary. Hence it is, that persons who have established a reputation in one line, sometimes take much greater pleasure in hearing themselves praised in another, though it be comparatively frivolous. In the former case there is certainty, in the latter not. The great Cuvier is said to have prided himself more on his political talents, which were but second-rate, than on his merits as a natural historian, which were known to all Europe; and a late celebrated chemist was, finally, more elated by his success in salmon fishing, than by his well deserved scientific fame. Thus

uncertainty and difficulty not only increase desire, but also the pleasure of success.

Many amusements which now greatly please us would probably soon cease to be amusements, if they cost us nothing. Were the doors of theatres, opera-houses, and concert-rooms thrown open to the public gratuitously, we should begin to fancy that they were scarcely worth entering; and even when we did enter, the preconceived notion would somewhat prevent our enjoyment: so much are our feelings influenced by our opinions. Those contrivances which abound in civilized society for the convenience and comfort of life may often overshoot the mark by rendering pleasure too easy. Even travelling, one of our principal excitements, may thus be stripped of its charm. Locomotive engines are admirable expedients for saving time and clearing space, but in spite of the rapid motion, railway coaches, when novelty is over, will be found rather dull conveyances. Steam boats also, though most useful inventions, are certainly far from amusing. To enjoy travelling thoroughly, the traveller must have something more to do than merely to sit and gaze; he must seek adventure, and neither fear difficulty nor shrink from bodily labour; and then he will find that

There is sweetness in the mountain air,  
And life that bloated ease can never hope to share.<sup>37</sup>

The dull and morbid meets with difficulties every where, for in the want of real, he creates imaginary;

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<sup>37</sup> Childe Harold, Canto 1.

while the gay and animated scarcely perceives any. The former is open to every annoyance, the latter to every delight; the one, after travelling over Europe, tells of the impositions, the discomfort, the dirt, the loathsome insects he has met with; while the other dwells on the charms of scenery, the pleasing contrast of manners and customs, the useful institutions of the present day, and the interesting recollections of the past. *Cælum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt*, says the poet; and in part he is right, for the mind we bring with us casts a light or a shadow on every object.

Having already alluded to ABSENCE as a promoter of love, and having accounted for its effects on the two principles of *variety* and *privation*, little remains to be said under that head. Here, however, I must allude to the opinion of Rochefoucauld, who has said that absence diminishes moderate, and increases strong passions.<sup>38</sup> There is truth in this, but not the exact truth. The fact seems to be, that absence, like difficulty, has a two-fold effect; it first inflames, and afterwards deadens passion; but the period which may elapse before the secondary result take place, will depend upon the original force of the desire. In the beginning, absence always acts in the former way; but when prolonged, in the latter. No passion is so weak as not to be enforced for a moment by absence, and none is so strong as to resist it when long continued. The time at which the reverse effect

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<sup>38</sup> L'absence diminue les mediocres passions et augmente les grandes, comme le vent qui éteint les bougies et allume le feu. *Maxime* 284.

shall commence admits of infinite variety, and therefore cannot be exactly stated.

Besides the original strength of the passion, the nature of the life led by the parties, and the turn of their minds, will materially influence the period during which the primary effect of absence shall be felt. A life of great variety, of study, or of business will of course sooner drive the absent object from the mind than one of monotony, idleness, or contemplation ; and a deep, retentive, melancholic character will not so soon forget as the gay and the frivolous. This is so obvious as scarcely to deserve notice.

Absence seems to imply separation at a distance, and this, no doubt, produces the greatest effects, whether in the way of increasing or diminishing love ; for when the beloved object is within our reach, the knowledge that we can see it when we please does away greatly with the feeling of privation, but prevents us from forgetting. So, absence from one's native country at a great distance, makes one long for it extremely, or else forget it altogether. Another reason is, that separation near at hand is not likely to be of long duration. It is, however, very valuable, because always in our own power. Scarcely any persons, however fond, can be all day together without getting tired of each other's company. The lover, husband, or friend who has any knowledge of human nature will be aware of this, and will take care by a timely separation to prevent that wearisome feeling so injurious to every affection. Lovers are constantly complaining that they cannot see enough of each other, but fortunate are those who complain ; for if

they saw more, they would probably feel less. They think not how the pain of separation enhances the rapture of intercourse.<sup>39</sup>

To conclude, absence, if short, is good ; but if long, dangerous.

“When a person is once heartily in love, the little faults and caprices of his mistress, the jealousies and quarrels to which that commerce is so subject, however unpleasant they be, and rather connected with anger and hatred, are yet found, in many instances, to give additional force to the prevailing passion.”<sup>40</sup> The only explanation of this which Hume has attempted amounts to no more, than that one passion favours another, however different. “The connection is, in many cases, closer between any two passions, than between any passion and indifference.” This may be true, but it is by no means self-evident ; and consequently, the explanation is, at best, incomplete. In truth, it is no explanation properly so called, but simply the fact stated in other terms, a very frequent fallacy ; for we are first told that these tiffs do increase love, and then as a reason we are informed that every passion favours another. Here no cause is assigned for the fact, but this is simply classed as a particular case of a general law. We have therefore generalization, but no causation.

*Amantium iræ amoris redintegratio est*

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<sup>39</sup> The Spartan lawgiver, however, was well aware of this, for he took care to throw difficulties in the way of the intercourse of young married people.

<sup>40</sup> Hume ; Dissertation on the Passions. Sect. vi.

is an old and well-approved maxim ; so that all we have to discover is, what is the essential circumstance or circumstances involved in these quarrels, on which their efficacy depends as a wholesome medicine of love ; just as we have discovered the essential principle, morphea, enveloped in a mass of opium.

Having already explained the effects of jealousy, we need not say more on that point ; but the efficacy of little caprices and quarrels may be stated to depend upon two circumstances connected with them ; the variety and the occupation which they afford. It is evident that they break that uniform sweetness which is apt at last to cloy, and by a short interruption make us more alive to the joys of returning love. At the same time they oblige us to think upon the object of our affections ; for, being naturally anxious to find out what has given displeasure, and to remove the cause, we must reflect upon every circumstance connected with the past intercourse, and lay plans for our future behaviour. Now, all these thoughts recall the object, and the object constantly suggests the passion, and fixes it deeply in the soul.

Here, then, we see the real causes why women who most deserve to be loved, are not always the most successful in retaining the affections of those to whom they are attached. That angelic sweetness of temper which “ can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day,” and that readiness to forgive occasional neglect or injury, which is so amiable in most relations of life, are not the most favourable to love, which requires occupation and variety.

But if uniformity be one deadly foe to love, over-

vexation is another. Women cannot be too cautious in adopting the practice of teasing, for it is a game in which much skill is required, and much knowledge of the opposite party. To be sure of winning, they must look into the other hand. Some men feel these jarrings more than others, and will soon throw up their cards when they find them a source of dispute. Others care for them less ; but let it be always remembered, that every instance of pure caprice or of ill-founded resentment tends to lessen esteem, and without esteem, love is but the sport of an hour. Occasional quarrels, like occasional jealousies, may increase love, but who could endure a life made up of the one or the other ?

“Nothing more powerfully excites any affection than to conceal some part of its object, by throwing it into a kind of shade, which at the same time that it shows enough to prepossess us in favour of the object, leaves still some room for the imagination.”<sup>41</sup> This holds true, not only of the affections, properly so called, which have a reference to sentient beings, but also of the other emotions ; for instance, those of beauty and sublimity. Obscurity, as Hume observes, is always attended with some uncertainty, and this, as we have seen, is eminently favourable to emotion. Besides, the sphere of imagination is boundless, while that of reality is fixed ; so that by exchanging the former for the latter, we give up the infinite for the finite. It is scarcely possible to gain by this exchange, unless our imagination be very dull, or the

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<sup>41</sup> Hume ; *Dissertation on the Passions*, Sect. vi.

reality be of transcendent excellence. Views partially concealed are generally the most beautiful ; and hence hills of moderate elevation offer the most agreeable prospects, and the sides of lofty mountains are commonly more interesting than their summits. The charm of waterfalls depends very much upon the narrow bed in which the river flows, for if the same quantity of water fall over an exposed rock, it strikes us but little. When a river is confined between rocks, it appears more considerable than when it flows in a wide and open bed ; for fancy, in the former case, exaggerates its capability of expansion. The most costly and elegant furniture cannot make up for the want of curtains to break the glare of light. So it is with the emotion of beauty depending on the human form, and with the subsequent emotions which are probably heightened rather than diminished by the veil of dress. In a few cases, the naked figure might surpass our expectations, but in the great majority, it would be otherwise. We see a little, and fancy a great deal more, commonly more than the reality. But although a naked figure should equal or surpass our expectations, and should produce a more powerful effect at first, still it would be much less lasting. The impression of beauty being instantaneous and involuntary, the mind in receiving it is altogether passive, and when all is disclosed at once, it has no scope for activity, and therefore speedily tires : but when much is concealed, the mind has something to work upon, a veil to be torn asunder by the aid of fancy, and unknown beauties or deformities to be hoped or dreaded. Thus the mind is kept ac-



tive and occupied about the object, and occupation is necessary to maintain emotion. In the one case, the impression is produced entirely through the senses, in the other, partly through these, partly through the imagination and its kindred emotions. From this and other considerations it is probable that dress diminishes the empire of lust, but greatly increases that of love.

An objection to the above views may be raised from the case of painting and statuary, since in these arts, naked figures are more beautiful than clothed, and are more apt to excite lasting as well as strong emotions. But this is exactly an instance in which a seeming exception proves the rule. There are two circumstances peculiar to works of art which sufficiently explain the apparent anomaly. While, on the one hand, the artist who copies nature takes care to choose the finest models, to bring together every beauty, and discard every deformity ; on the other, he who represents a clothed figure cannot make us fancy that any charms lie hid under painted or marble folds. In the former case, we have nudity in its perfection, in the latter, concealment without scope for the imagination ; and therefore we cannot be surprised that the naked figure should impress us more.

The following lines occur in Tasso, when describing the beautiful Armida, and the arts which she employed to entrap the hearts of the Christians :

Mostra il bel petto le sue nevi ignude  
Onde il foco d'amor si nutre e desta :  
Parte appar delle mamme acerbe e crude,  
Parte altrui ne ricopre invida vesta ;

Invida, ma s'agli occhi il varco chiude,  
 L'amoroso pensier già non arresta,  
 Che non ben pago di bellezza esterna,  
 Negli occulti secreti anco s'interna.<sup>42</sup>

In the intercourse of lovers or friends nothing ought more to be avoided than too much familiarity. Familiarity is injurious to affection in three ways: First, it may make us acquainted with little weaknesses and peculiarities, and so give birth to *contempt*: Secondly, it may disclose some bodily defect or unpleasantness, and thus create *disgust*: and thirdly, by leading to unwarrantable liberties it wounds pride, and hence produces *dislike*. In all cases, the *vitæ Postcenia* are carefully to be hid. *Celanda vitæ Postcenia*.<sup>43</sup>

Moreover, everything relating to sense cannot be too sedulously shrouded in the gossamer veil of the imagination.

If the saying be true, that “a prophet is of no honour in his own country,” it is owing to this that he is known too familiarly; so that any peculiarity

<sup>42</sup> Come per acqua, o per cristallo, intero  
 Trapassa il raggio, e nol divide o parte;  
 Per entro il chiuso manto osa il pensiero  
 Sì penetrar nella vietata parte.  
 Ivi si spazia, ivi contempla il vero  
 Di tante meraviglie a parte a parte:  
 Poscia al desio le narra e le descrive,  
 E ne fa le sue fiamme in lui più vive.

La Gerusalemme Liberata, Canto iv. st. 31, 32.

<sup>43</sup> Nec Veneres nostras hoc fallit: quo magis ipsæ  
 Omnia summopere hos vitæ postcenia celant,  
 Quos retinere volunt, adscriptosque esse in amore.

Lucret. Lib. iv. 1179.

of character or some circumstance connected with his birth and parentage may predispose his countrymen against him, and prevent them from duly appreciating his great qualities.

Reserve is opposed to familiarity ; but we must not confound reserve of manner with reserve of mind, which is allied to want of confidence, and is therefore opposed to affection. Rochefoucauld, indeed, has said that in love deceit almost always goes farther than distrust ;<sup>44</sup> and there can be no doubt, that in a certain stage, both may exist to a certain extent ; that the latter is often unavoidable, while the former may even be necessary. Distrust is often unavoidable, because we cannot desire any object strongly without fearing to be baffled ; so that the more we prize the affections of any one, the more, at first, do we doubt that the love is reciprocal. We may fear lest our fair one be merely playing with us, and so prove an arch coquette. Again, some deceit is frequently necessary to rouse a feeling in the opposite party ; for the grand remedy for cruelty in the one is pretended indifference in the other. Indifference real or affected wounds vanity, dispels security, and may rouse jealousy, if our attentions be transferred to a third party ; and jealousy which began in vanity may terminate in love. But should there have been any latent love beforehand, jealousy will be sure to bring it out. This, as we have seen, is readily accounted for on the principle of *privation*, for fear forms a part

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<sup>44</sup> Dans l'amour, la tromperie va presque toujours plus loin que la méfiance. *Max.* 342.

of jealousy, and we value that more which we fear to lose. Thus, in the first and growing stage of Love, distrust and deceit are found, and both may serve to bring it to maturity ; but when fully ripe, they turn it all to rottenness. Then mutual confidence should be the general rule ; though still there may be exceptions. Many thoughts pass through the mind, which, if not communicated, are sure to be speedily forgotten ; but when imparted, they may acquire a real importance in the eyes of the individual himself, and still more in those of the other party. Any serious cause of displeasure ought of course to be mentioned, but many petty grievances are best passed over in silence. Silence as to great matters fixes them more deeply in the soul, but silence as to small allows them to be forgotten. It is impossible to say how many quarrels may be prevented by this beneficent goddess, whose genuine offspring is Peace.

Books and music which tend to soften the heart may be considered as a principal food of love. Probably nothing promotes it more than reading together some tale in prose or verse, naturally written, and representing the passion in its most amiable and perfect light. Dante pictures Francesca da Rimini and her kinsman as thus engaged when the smouldering fire of love at once burst into a blaze :

Noi leggievamo un giorno, per diletto,  
Di Lancillotto, come amor lo strinse.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Dell' Inferno, Canto v.

With some, music has a most powerful effect in raising the tender emotions :

If music be the food of love, play on,  
Give me excess of it.  
That strain again ;—it had a dying fall :  
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet south,  
That breathes upon a bank of violets,  
Stealing, and giving odour.<sup>46</sup>

Music-masters have long been considered as rather dangerous companions for young ladies.

Since the imagination and the affections are closely allied, poetry and all works of fiction may have a decided effect ; for when the imagination is once excited, it soon warms the prevailing passion by clothing it in a garment of many colours.

Lastly, Gifts and other little attentions may be mentioned as promoting love. Gifts produce an effect in various ways. In the first place, being associated with the giver, they serve perpetually to recall him ; secondly, they recall him agreeably ; thirdly, they are a proof to the receiver that he also is remembered ; and lastly, that he is remembered with partiality. Undoubtedly, the principal charm of gifts consists in their being considered as love-tokens, so delightful is it to think that we are indeed preferred by another. The heart of man yearns after affection, and eagerly catches at any mark of it in look, gesture, word, or deed. The three former vanish in the act, and leave no memorial behind them ; but the last may exist in its effects longer than we ourselves. Let us not then

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<sup>46</sup> Twelfth-night, Scene I.

undervalue gifts, which in themselves may seem but trifling, for nothing really is trifling that serves to conciliate love.

Nay, in this respect, small favours are decidedly to be preferred to great. In every species of affection those acts please the most which prove that we are beloved, yet lay us under no obligation. Very important favours, on the other hand, are always somewhat dangerous, and for the following reasons: he who receives the bounty is thereby made sensible of the other's superiority, and hence of his own inferiority, and therefore he is painfully humiliated; while the giver, on his part, is too apt to expect something in return. The gift instead of recalling the donor with pleasure, rather associates him with pain, and pain, even when unintentional, leads to dislike of its author. Partly from a wish to silence his conscience, which rebukes him for such ingratitude, partly from the rarity of disinterested bounty, the person obliged will have it that the present was not quite gratuitous, but given for a secret end. He thus strives to throw off the load of obligation and the consciousness of his baseness which together sink him to the earth, and becomes openly ungrateful to show that he does not consider himself obliged. The benefactor, on the other hand, too frequently does expect a return proportionate to the greatness of the favour, and is indignant when he finds it not; but when he meets with just the contrary, he naturally swells with rage. This demand for a return is eagerly seized upon by the other party as an excuse for being ungrateful; and thus in both bosoms love

is supplanted by hate. We may be sure, however, that ingratitude would be less common were favours more frequently gratuitous. The expectation of a return does away with the whole merit of the gift, and renders it in truth no gift at all; but while it affords the receiver the only fair excuse for ingratitude, it does not prevent the giver from feeling as incensed as if he had been a free benefactor. Nay, he is probably more so, because he expected something and is disappointed; whereas, had he looked for nothing, one pain at least would be saved him, and therefore his anger would be less.

The danger of excessive gifts, the speedy ingratitude consequent thereon, and the ungovernable rage upon the first symptoms of such ingratitude are all admirably exemplified in the tragedy of King Lear, a miracle of genius and knowledge of human nature.

Darkness and devils !—

Saddle my horses! call my train together.—

Degenerate bastard !

is Lear's first reply to Goneril's complaint as to the conduct of his followers.

Presently he says :

Hear, nature, hear !

Dear goddess, hear ! Suspend thy purpose, if

Thou didst intend to make this creature fruitful !

Into her womb convey sterility !

Dry up in her the organs of increase ;

And from her derogate<sup>47</sup> body never spring

A babe to honour her ! If she must teem,

Create her child of spleen ; that it may live,

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<sup>47</sup> Degraded.

And be a thwart disnatur'd torment to her !  
 . . . . . that she may feel  
 How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is  
 To have a thankless child !

Again,

Blasts and fogs upon thee !  
 The untented<sup>48</sup> woundings of a father's curse  
 Pierce every sense about thee !——

Yet have I left a daughter,  
 Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable ;  
 When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails  
 She'll flay thy wolfish visage.<sup>49</sup>

5. Having discussed two of the principal drawbacks to Love ; first, Jealousy ; secondly, Love's own frail and delicate nature, so liable to be chilled and blasted in every stage of its growth ; and having shown how it may be fostered and kept alive ; we have now to notice the vicious and imprudent conduct to which it often leads. This, however, is an inconvenience common to all our desires. All of them may lead to our harm, nay, to our destruction ; but since without them man would be an inert, a joyless, and an useless being, and since to destroy

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<sup>48</sup> Undressed. *Commentator*.

<sup>49</sup> Act I. Scene IV.

Cases more or less similar to the above are met with frequently in the world ; but it has happened to me to know one remarkably analogous to that of Lear. I was well acquainted with a Tuscan gentleman of good family, lately deceased, who, from some peculiarity of mind, chose to make over his whole estate to his younger brother, reserving to himself only a small pension to be paid by the latter. He was treated with the blackest ingratitude, and had the greatest difficulty in obtaining that income which was his sole resource.



them is impossible, even if desirable, it follows that we have only to direct and regulate them to the best advantage. Things the most essential are sometimes those which are subject to the greatest drawbacks. Thus, self-interest, though absolutely necessary to the well-being, and even to the existence of mankind, is the source of innumerable evils; and though love may frequently lead to vice and misery, it is essential to the continuance of our race. At least one of the elements is so, which has a peculiar appellation; and this, the most indispensable part of the whole compound, is precisely the source of the evil. Were Love not sensual, it would cease to be dangerous; but then it would miss its principal end. It is well however to know where the danger lies, in order to be on our guard. The more we refine Love and separate it from Sense, the more do we lessen the ill effects and secure the good; nor need we fear to carry this refinement too far, since nature tends so strongly the other way. Most of the misery connected with Love, whether to individuals or nations, arises from the predominance of Sense; for this it is which leads to vicious connections, to headlong marriages, to the beggary of families, and the decline of states. It is Lust, not Love, which is the real cause of the mischief, and which therefore requires a check. This check must be supplied by reason, and by education, which refines the mind, gives a taste for the pleasures of the intellect, the imagination, and the affections, and teaches self-control. Thus, and thus only, shall we find the happiness, without the misery of Love.

The wretchedness arising from imprudent marriages is so well known, so palpable, and has been so much dwelt on by different writers, as well as by the author himself in other publications, that it seems unnecessary to dwell upon it here. But what he would insist upon in this place, is another and more concealed sort of unhappiness which often follows such rash connections. We must not, however, confound two very different sorts of marriages, the one the result of a sudden and impetuous passion kindled by beauty alone; the other the consequence of Love no doubt, but of Love confirmed by time, by a mutual knowledge of tastes and disposition, and therefore approved by reason. Marriages of the last sort may still be imprudent if entered upon too early, before a fit provision be secured, but otherwise they are the wisest of all; while the former are certainly the most silly. Beauty is one of the poorest foundations for a lasting connexion, because we tire of it so soon.

Nay, we sometimes see persons, who married from this violent love, come in time to as violent hate; and they are even more prone to such extreme than others who came together without a spark of affection. The reason is, that Love had prodigiously exaggerated the merits of the object, and concealed or diminished every fault and imperfection; while the passion being founded chiefly on personal charms cannot long be supported. Even if it could, persons so thoughtless are not the most likely to hit upon expedients for the purpose, and still less would they have strength of mind to put them in practice.

Therefore, the unavoidable consequence is a decline of affection, an opening of the eyes as if from a dream, a view of character never before suspected, and hence the anguish of disappointment, speedily followed by aversion.

Those, on the other hand, who marry without love, expect nothing at all events, and therefore cannot be disappointed ; and in course of time there sometimes grows up a certain want of each other, the *necessitudo* of the Latins ; a sort of mutual regard, trifling as compared with love, but still the shadow of affection.

It may be a question, whether those who began their married life in transports, and continued it in hate, can ever experience a rise of kindly feeling similar to this *necessitudo* ; but if so, it cannot be until time has thrown into forgetfulness both the expectations and the disappointment. The original cause of the aversion being forgotten, the effect itself may cease, if not kept alive by other and subsequent irritations ; and then, out of long intercourse, there may spring up a secondary affection, like the ghost of a friend departed. In this case, the following would probably be the succession ; love, hate, indifference, renewed regard.

But to marry on the faint prospect, that at some remote period, a degree of regard may arise, is to incur a present and certain evil, for the sake of a distant and uncertain good. If purely passionate marriages be very silly, marriages of pure convenience are so too, though in this case the folly is not quite so palpable. The evils of the former are such as any one may see ;

straitened circumstances, misunderstandings, quarrels, and sometimes final dislike, all which strike us the more by contrast with the previous love. The latter, on the contrary, carry an air of wisdom about them, they are said to be prudent, convenient, and so forth ; but how often is folly clothed in a borrowed garb ! One would think that any man of sense and spirit, having the common use of his bodily faculties, would rather delve or plough than submit to pass his life with one who was quite indifferent. To be burthened for life with such a weary load, to feel it at all hours, and on all occasions, at home and in society, at table and by the fire-side, to be hampered eternally, and never be able to forget it, is a consummation of annoyance, which nothing, one would think, but absolute necessity, could induce a man to undergo. But facts speak otherwise ; for marriages of this kind are not only very common, but in some countries there are scarcely any other. This, it must be confessed, does not speak much for the general clear-sightedness of men, but above all, it shows how they are led by example ; for where such alliances have long been usual, they are entered upon as a matter of course.

When persons meet only now and then, indifference may be maintained, but when they are constantly thrown in each other's way, it will generally change to love or hate. One with whom we always live, must be a source either of pleasure or of pain, and therefore will be liked or disliked ; and since matrimony without previous affection is a decided evil, bringing with it increase of care and loss of liberty, it follows, that

the person associated with such evil will be apt to create aversion. This aversion may in time be got over, and be followed by a degree of regard, but the secondary result is doubtful. To man especially liberty is a pearl of price, which is not given up without a struggle, nor ought without an equivalent.

For know, Iago,  
But that I love the gentle Desdemona,  
I would not my unhoused free condition  
Put into circumscription and confine,  
For the sea's worth.

Affection, then, is a real equivalent for loss of liberty; but in marriages without affection, what do we get in exchange? Women, indeed, may gain, for in countries where wedlock is reduced to a mere bargain between parents, girls are kept in perfect bondage, and marriage is hailed as the era of emancipation. The previous constraint gives to the subsequent relaxation, a charm which otherwise it could not have possessed. This increase of freedom may balance the loss of that watchful care, that tender solicitude which the daughter commonly meets with from her parents, but which the wife can never expect from an indifferent husband; though modesty alone might make a girl shrink from a man who cares for her not a rush. But example has a wonderful effect in modifying our genuine sentiments, and the prospect of change is generally pleasing to the young. Besides, in the above countries, girls are often sent to convents and other establishments, partly for education, partly to be out of the way, and therefore they know only

the restraint and monotony of school, not the sweets of home. In such unnatural and heartless states of society, marriage, even without affection, may be an advantage to woman, but to man it must be an evil ; though example, solicitation of parents, and perhaps pecuniary considerations induce him to submit to it as a necessity. Whatever benefit he reaps from it, at first at least, is derived not from the matrimonial commerce, but from extraneous circumstances attached to it, not from the personal qualities of his partner, but from her purse. He marries the dowry, not its owner, who is only an unpleasant appendage ; like the babe who swallows a drug for the sake of a lump of sugar. In time, indeed, children may come, and give a charm to that intercourse which at first had none, and so create a feeling in favour of the mother ; and to the “ old and fond of issue,” such may be a sufficient inducement ; but to those who have the world before them, what a poor look out is this !

But these are not the only evils belonging to such marriages. They entirely do away with courtship, that most delightful and fairy period of life, which can be enjoyed in perfection but once. He who has passed through such a period seldom fails to consider it as by far the brightest scene of his existence, the era of romantic hope, of novelty, of poetry, and of love. Creatures at other times dull and inanimate seem then to renew their being, and to soar upon eagles’ wings to regions of visionary bliss. Their eye becomes more brilliant, their speech more eloquent, their susceptibility of enjoyment more acute, and they

view the world and those who it inhabit, through a medium which enlivens all things. Assuredly the most perfect idea which we can form of happy love, is that of a long courtship with marriage at the close ; a courtship varied by difficulty, yet animated by hope, prompting to exertion, yet always sweetening toil, feeding on luxuries to come, but prevented from plucking the fruit before it be fully ripe. Who would compare with this the mercenary bargain where liberty is sold for pelf, or the appetite which destroys itself by a premature voracity ? How frequent among the Scottish peasantry are instances of devoted attachment continued for years, till prudence allow an union, we may learn from the interesting work of Dr. Currie ; and certainly he could not have brought forward a stronger proof of virtue. How different the sensual Irishman, who, throwing away all the pleasures of the prospect, and shutting his eyes to ruin, leaps at once into the gulf !

It is of great importance to our present happiness, as well as to our future improvement, so to manage our life as to seize upon those sources of interest that are peculiar to each stage of it, and which, if once let slip, are gone for ever. We thus obtain one grand advantage, variety. The boy who is educated entirely at home loses all his school existence, and all the peculiar amusement, the emulation, and the knowledge of his fellows, which school can give. So he who is sent too soon from home loses the peculiar happiness and morality of early family life. Were the arguments in favour of public or of private education even less balanced, this consideration should decide us to adopt

each in its turn ; for if home be invaluable in childhood, school is for boyhood alone. It is a fountain of health, from which we must drink to-day, for it will have ceased to flow for us to-morrow. The same observation applies to an university life, which is necessarily limited to one period of our existence. The three or four years which a young man spends at Oxford or Cambridge are passed in a manner quite peculiar, different from any thing either before or after, and they can be so passed only at a certain age.

Now this sort of life contains not only a great deal of enjoyment, and often of improvement, but these are exactly of a kind that can be had no where else. No where shall we find that peculiar society which is free from many of the formalities of the world, yet has nothing of the rudeness of boyhood, and which possesses a singular charm, from combining youth, equality, community of pursuits, and facility of intercourse. There, away from home, its affections and its restraints, true friendships are formed, such as it would be vain to look for in the world of ordinary life.

The above remark holds true of courtship, which must be run through at the proper time, or not at all. If the youth who goes neither to school nor college miss a sort of happiness which he never can afterwards enjoy, so assuredly does he who leaps over the period of courtship. Fortunate, then, are those who meet with some obstacles in the way, not to be cleared at a bound, but only by successive efforts, which prolong the period of fancy, and put off the day of reality. Women especially ought to de-



sire the prolongation of a period during which they rule supreme; for the wife must submit to a master, but the betrothed may command at will.

But the last and most weighty objection to marriages without affection remains yet to be mentioned. The grand argument against them is, that they tend to immorality. Since few persons pass through life without feeling love,<sup>50</sup> if the passion do not find a vent within matrimony, it probably will without. Marriage with no affection cannot fill the heart nor prevent the parties from falling in love with somebody else, and principle apart, they will be as apt to do so as if they were not married. Therefore, the natural consequence of such alliances is a general corruption of morals. And this conclusion is fully confirmed by experience; for wherever marriage is nothing but a family arrangement, there a general laxity prevails. This laxity is a cause as well as an effect of such matrimonial connexions; a cause, for the knowledge that great laxity is commonly practised, and therefore treated with lenity, induces the parties to consent to a mercenary union; an effect, according to the principle above stated. Thus, the practice of marrying without affection must be regarded as a symptom as well as a cause of a corrupt

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<sup>50</sup> An anecdote is told of the German political writer Gentz, not long dead, which shews that a man may fall in love at almost any age. He is said never to have been attached to any one till the age of sixty, when he became so enamoured of a very young person, since one of the principal dancers at the French Opera, that he could not exist without her.

state of society.<sup>51</sup> The utmost that can be said in favour of such marriages amounts only to this, that as nothing is looked for, there can be no disappointment; but on the same principle, we ought to desire no good, lest it should not fulfil our expectations.

III. Before concluding the present subject, it may be well to compare love with friendship, and both with family attachment.

It has already been remarked, that all the ties that bind man to man belong to two classes, those which he finds ready formed for him, and those which he forms for himself. Now love and friendship make up the latter class of affections, which are distinguished from the former by this circumstance, that they are entirely the offspring of choice. Love and friendship, then, being most nearly allied, we shall first show how they differ, and then compare them with other attachments.

Friendship is essentially distinguished from Love by the absence of the sensual desire, which is a necessary element of the latter. Thus of the four elements which compose love, friendship contains but three; a pleasure derived from beholding or thinking on the object, a desire of its happiness, and a desire of its affections. Probably all the peculiarities of the two may be traced to this one fundamental difference.

We know by experience that friendship is a less selfish affection than love; and we now readily see the reason; for, of the two self-regarding desires

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<sup>51</sup> See note A.

which exist in the latter, one alone is found in the former. Friendship is also a more refined affection, because the gross and sensual desire is wanting.

When love approaches to the nature of mere lust, that is, when the sensual desire becomes by far the most prominent of the whole compound, then its selfishness is quite apparent, for it will often sacrifice the permanent peace of its object for a mere temporary gratification. But even when love is a more refined feeling, self is more looked to than in friendship; not merely on account of the above desire peculiar to the former, and which always exists in a degree, but also by reason of the greater craving for a return of love. We certainly desire the affections of our friends, but we wish their welfare more; whereas we are more eager for the heart than for the happiness of our mistress. So long as that happiness is owing to ourselves alone, we are all anxiety to promote it, but if it proceed from another, it may give rise to jealousy, and every bad passion. Nothing can prove more clearly that to secure the affections, to make them *our own* is the principal object, to do good but secondary. Nor is it necessary that a rival be of our own sex, for we often see a husband jealous of his wife's female relations, of her mother or sisters. Wishing to monopolize her affections, he is unwilling to share them even with woman. Sometimes he throws every impediment in the way of her intercourse with her own family, or even prevents it altogether, although he know it to be necessary to her happiness, a proof that this is not his first object. Such instances are instructive,

chiefly because they shew that the desire for the affections is truly self-regarding, and that by its predominance it may render love a very selfish passion, liable to jealousy and other malignant feelings, even when the person is monopolized and out of danger.

This same desire exists in every private attachment; though in love it is stronger than in any other. It is this which sometimes renders very affectionate parents jealous of the love which their married children bear to their wives or husbands; for, with no other cause of complaint, they are apt to consider these as foes who have stolen away their choicest treasure. The stronger the parent's love, the deeper this feeling will be; and where the former is slight, the latter may never take root. But more or less of antipathy is natural between a husband and his wife's parents, or a wife and her husband's parents, for the affection of the wife or husband is like a property to which many pretend; and while the one party wishes for all, and the other demands a share, there must be a degree of contention. In time this may calm down, because the love of all gets tamer, in the one case from custom, in the other from continued separation; but so long as the affection is ardent, jealousy will be felt. Where parents pretend to any authority over their married children, there we have another source of jealousy, and when they live together, we may be sure that the former will not give up at once the habit of their lives.

Jealousy may certainly exist in friendship, but on

the whole it is more rare and less intense than in any other private attachment. The reason seems to be, first, that friendship is seldom a very warm feeling, and secondly, that even when it is, the desire for the happiness of the object is stronger than for its affections. It is because friendship is generally cool and peculiarly free from selfishness, that it seldom gives occasion for the malignant passions. The absence of the sensual, and the weakness of the other self-regarding desire, which render friendship so tame as compared with love, make it also the most amiable of affections. But whatever the relation may be, lover, friend, parent, child, or brother, the stronger the social desire as compared with the self-regarding, the more free is the affection from jealousy and every bad feeling of our nature.

The peculiar characteristics of friendship are perfect confidence, and a mutual communication of thoughts and sentiments without suspicion or reserve. In love, as we have seen, there is often distrust, and therefore the intercourse cannot be perfectly frank and unconstrained, and were it so, it might defeat its end ; but in true friendship there is neither distrust, deceit, nor concealment. Here all is openness, ease, and mutual reliance. The peculiar charm of this commerce lies entirely in the interchange of opinions and feelings, and in the ready sympathy they find ; so delightful is it to meet with one who can understand and enter into our most secret thoughts and emotions. The immense advantage of a true friend is manifest from this, that grief is diminished and joy increased by communication ; so that he who has

bound another to himself, has found at once an antidote for the bitterness, and a seasoning for the sweets of life.

The most interesting description of friendship to be found probably in any author, is that which Montaigne has given us in his *Essays*, and the description is valuable because it is drawn from nature, and not from mere fancy. He represents himself and his friend as having become acquainted before they met, having sought each other from report alone; and the moment they did meet they were bound for ever. Thenceforth, they became, as he says, like one soul with two bodies, for all their thoughts, wishes, and even goods were in common. Their minds did not touch in one point only, but in all, and the will of the one became completely blended and identified with that of the other. In the whole of French literature I know nothing so beautiful or so striking as this *Essay*. Montaigne says in concluding; "In truth, if I compare all the rest of my life, though by the grace of God I have passed it sweetly, easily, and, barring the loss of such a friend, free from grievous affliction, full of tranquillity of mind, having partaken of my natural and original advantages without seeking others; if, I say, I compare it all with the four years during which it was given to me to enjoy the sweet company and society of that person, it is but smoke, it is but a dark and tiresome night. Since the day that I lost him,

quem semper acerbum  
Semper honoratum (sic dî voluistis!) habebō,

I drag on languidly; and even the pleasures which

present themselves to me, instead of consoling me, redouble my regret for his loss ; we went halves in every thing ; I seem to rob him of his share.

Nec fas esse ullâ me voluptate hîc frui  
Decrevi, tantisper dum ille abest meus particeps." <sup>52</sup>

The above essay of Montaigne is descriptive rather than philosophical, and since to that description it would be difficult to add any thing, I shall proceed to consider the circumstances necessary to the growth of friendship. These circumstances are chiefly two, similarity and equality, which is in truth but one kind of similarity ; but by the former I mean sameness of mind, by the latter, of age and station. Herein we see a marked difference between friendship and love, that the one depends on Similarity alone, while the other owes much to Contrast. That mutual and constant interchange of thoughts and feelings which is necessary to the former, can take place only where these are mutually assented to and understood, and such an agreement supposes similarity of mind. If persons differing in many respects are sometimes friends, or at least close companions, their intimacy is not owing to the differences, but in spite of them ; while some point of resemblance known perhaps only to the parties forms the real bond of their union. It is manifest that individuals whose opinions are constantly jarring, or whose emotions are quite opposed, can never be joined in soul ; and that those who are one in mind can alone

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<sup>52</sup> Essais de Montaigne, liv. i. ch. 27.

be really one. Every point of difference must render the fusion less intimate, and therefore the friendship less complete. Were friendship perfect, we should wish for the happiness of our friend as much as for our own, and the closer the resemblance the easier does this become, because the other is then as a second self. By a sort of deception, one exceedingly similar is looked upon almost as the same, and therefore the good of the former seems identical with that of the latter. Thus, by a singular effort of imagination, a friend is put for self, and his interest pursued as our own.

Love, on the other hand arises partly from Similarity, partly from Contrast. The qualities which man most admires in woman are precisely those most opposed to his own, delicacy of feeling, a bewitching softness of manner, voice, and appearance, tenderness, bashfulness, even weakness and timidity. Masculine women may have many great and praiseworthy qualities, but they cannot boast of conquests in love; while those who are utterly helpless are often quite adored. So strong is this tendency in some men that they are captivated with women chiefly on account of their feeble health, care little for the ruddy and strong, and even marry for no other cause than what ought to be a powerful reason against matrimony. Frail but beautiful creatures reposing on a sick couch, are too much for the hearts of such men; for sickness creates pity, and pity is akin to love. Women, again, are struck with the strength of mind and body peculiar to man, with his courage, decision, independence, his rough mien, and un-



blushing countenance; while they rather despise beardless boys, and simpering drawing-room gentlemen. Thus, it is clear that contrast is a source of love; though without similarity it can hardly continue long. The former produces a sudden and violent impression, but the latter is more to be relied on, for the one loses its effect, and the other becomes known by intercourse. Similarity alone could never give rise to passion, nor contrast to a pure affection; but their union creates a feeling combining the steadiness of friendship with the energy of love. The truth seems to be that so far as the two are alike both depend upon similarity; but for what is peculiar to itself, love is indebted to contrast.

Equality of age and station is also essential to friendship, chiefly because it is necessary to produce similarity of mind; for every age and even every station has its own character. It is evident that childhood and manhood, boyhood and old age differ too widely to admit of an intimate union; and this remark, though modified, must be applicable to the intermediate ages. The nearer the ages approach, the less is difference of character perceptible, so far as that depends upon time of life. If infancy and extreme old age often seem to suit, it is partly because the latter is somewhat similar to the former, partly because the little gaiety of the one, and its ceaseless but gentle activity form a contrast which wonderfully relieves the dullness and torpor of the other. Such an intercourse, however, must, it is evident, be very different from friendship.

Equality of station is also required, for without it,

there cannot be a community of tastes and pursuits. This is manifest where the difference is great, as between a ploughman and a nobleman, a workman and a wealthy manufacturer; and what is true of extremes must, in a degree, hold good of the means. Besides the necessity for harmony in the above particulars, it is essential to true friendship that each of the parties have an equal, or nearly equal power of benefiting the other; otherwise, the relation becomes that of patron and client, where gratitude is due and expected. As soon as one is laid under an obligation such as he cannot repay, he becomes less a friend, because he finds himself no longer free to perform the first duty of friendship, admonition, and no longer able to enjoy one of its chief delights, benefaction. Do what he may he cannot return an equivalent, and therefore he never feels the full pleasure of doing good; for he seems always to be making up a debt not conferring a gratuitous kindness. Not to mention what has before been dwelt on, that a great obligation is apt to create a painful feeling of humility that may lead to total estrangement. Hence an approximation to equality in station and fortune seems to be indispensable to friendship. Kings, it has long been remarked, have no friends; and why? because they have no equals.

The above principles will enable us to determine in what relative positions we may or may not expect a real friendship. Between parents and children there often is a strong affection, especially on the part of the former, but rarely if ever can it be of this kind; because the inequality of age and position

is too great. A child is bound to reverence and obey his father and mother, and must by no means admonish them, and therefore he cannot be a true friend; while a parent cannot communicate all his secrets to his son without diminishing the distance between them, and consequently lessening that respect which he thinks his due. Between brothers or sisters, the difference of age and position is commonly much less; though in countries where the right of primogeniture prevails, the elder occupies a station very different from the rest, and on this account he at least is shut out from equal commerce with the others. Amongst children of the same parents, there is generally some family resemblance in mind as well as in body, and strange would it be if otherwise, since they are commonly brought up and educated in the same manner. Moreover, they are constantly together, at least in their younger years, and have therefore every opportunity of forming a close intimacy. These circumstances considered, it may appear singular that brothers or sisters are not more frequently sworn friends; for the case is but an exception. We must remember, however, that, after all, education can only modify, not make the character, for we frequently see children who have always been treated alike, display from their earliest years the most opposite dispositions. Recollections of first intercourse and community of origin generally give brothers some feeling for each other, at least when nearly of an age; but if their characters be much at variance, they can never be intimate friends. Nay, there

seems to be something in that relationship which is even opposed to such intimacy. In manhood, the difference of a few years may go for nothing, but not so in boyhood ; and the elder brother being accustomed to assume some authority in his early years, he is apt to expect deference afterwards, and is annoyed if he find it not. This inequality, whether acknowledged or disputed, is enough to prevent a close connexion.

Partly on account of this early inequality of position and pretensions, partly by reason of the very nearness of the relationship, which makes any vice or disgrace of a kinsman a reflection on self, brothers or sisters are usually some restraint upon each other, and rarely are confidants. In youth especially, the elder thinks that he ought to take some charge of the younger, and if he communicate his own weaknesses, he can hardly expect to be listened to as a monitor ; while the younger conceals his faults from one who, from family pride, and even from sense of duty, would deal with them more severely than any other. Thus, on both sides, principles are at work utterly opposed to real friendship. A boy or a man would much rather impart his follies or vices to a mere companion than to a brother, for the elder fears to lose his dignity, and the younger to increase his inferiority, and meet with a bitter mentor.

Another disadvantage of the fraternal relationship is this, that brothers and sisters are constantly brought into comparison ; and since they start from the same point, if one outstrip the other, the latter cannot but see how much he has fallen behind. Had they not been brought so near, the difference between them

might not have been so perceptible ; as the respective merits of two race-horses are unknown until they run together. Should the elder be the one that is distanced, he will naturally feel jealous of the younger who has robbed him of his fancied superiority, and even left him in the lurch. Hence it is, that an elder brother is very often jealous of a younger, while the converse is more rare, because the latter has no supposed superiority to lose. The advancement of his senior being merely a continuation of that pre-eminence which the other has been accustomed to acknowledge, it therefore excites neither surprise nor any malignant feeling. This is especially the case with reference to the eldest of the family where the right of primogeniture prevails, for having always occupied a station decidedly above his brethren, his subsequent success or elevation cannot give rise to jealousy.

In the above remarks we have supposed no favouritism to be shown by the parents to any one of the children ; but when this occurs, it always creates jealousy, and often in an intense degree. The history of Joseph and his brethren presents a striking instance of the force of those bad passions which are roused by parental partiality. All these causes serve to explain how it comes to pass, that brothers or sisters so rarely are intimate friends.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *Solitis fratribus odiis* is the dreadful sentiment of Tacitus, which, for the credit of human nature, I must believe to be a great exaggeration. So far as brothers are liable to jealousy, there is truth in the observation, for hate is an element of this passion. The first murder was fratricide from jealousy ; and agreeably to what is said above, it was the elder who was jealous of the younger.

Marriage is unfavourable to friendships formed out of wedlock, partly because it too much engages the affections, partly because it necessarily involves secrets which can hardly be communicated to a third party. The latter also may have secrets which he would willingly communicate to a friend, but not to a friend's wife. This reserve attacks friendships in its very essence, and tends to prevent any strong attachment of the kind, or to loosen the tie if already formed. Indeed, it is well known, that after marriage, a man is no longer the same to his former intimates or to his near relations. If a husband did continue as bound to his friend as ever, a very loving wife would probably be jealous of the latter, and if the friend tried to ingratiate himself with the wife the husband might take the alarm. Thus there are various causes connected with marriage, which render it unfavourable to any other strong attachment.

Since each country has a set of notions and feelings, or a character peculiar to itself, it follows that friendship must always be rare between the inhabitants of different nations. Difference of language is of itself a great cause of separation.

We have seen that love and friendship are by this distinguished from all other ties, that they depend upon our own choice. This is a circumstance which gives a peculiar and inexpressible charm to such attachments. We are all apt highly to value what is our own doing ; and in some, the tendency is so strong that they never find any thing right in which they have had no part, while they pertinaciously cling to every thing, however faulty, which the darling self

has chosen. Bacon observes, "It is often seen that bad husbands have very good wives ;" and then adds, "but this never fails if the bad husbands were of their own choosing, against their friends' consent ; for then they will be sure to make good their own folly."<sup>54</sup>

But choice, which renders persons so dear to us, is liable to fickleness and caprice. One principal reason why strong and lasting friendships are so rare is, that, the parties not being bound together by any necessity, they can break whenever they please. Necessity is a grand cause of agreement. It is this which makes many married people live together on very tolerable terms, who otherwise would have come to an open rupture, and the same cause prevents innumerable quarrels between neighbours in the country. These, when brought together at county meetings, road meetings, &c., may find many sources of difference and dispute ; but knowing that they must pass their lives near each other, and that peace is their common interest, they soon shake hands and part in amity ; or should any rancour remain, it is effectually drowned after dinner in an additional bottle.

The advantage in question belongs likewise to relationship, for the parties being bound together by a tie not to be severed, they have a mutual interest in keeping on fair terms. This interest, however, we find is frequently insufficient, so numerous are the points at which relations come into collision. Since they can hardly help comparing themselves together, they are peculiarly liable to jealousy, and since their

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<sup>54</sup> Essays ; of Marriage and Single Life.

pecuniary interests often clash, they are exposed to deadly feuds.

This brings me to notice a circumstance which has often been remarked, but never been well accounted for. It is a well-known fact, that in France different families of relations frequently live together, amicably, or at least civilly; while in England such a community generally breaks up with a quarrel. In the one country, married sons or daughters often dwell with their parents until death; in the other, they commonly separate immediately, or at least, after a short time, for they cannot get on in peace. Whence this difference? Is not human nature the same on both sides of the channel? and if so, how to account for this striking diversity?

The explanation lies, as I conceive, in the different opinion of Necessity prevailing in the two countries; and this opinion has been gradually formed by custom. In England, it has never been the general custom for different families of relations to live together, and therefore those who do, *do so upon trial*; and the knowledge that it is but a trial is the very reason why it does not succeed. Since they feel free to separate when they please, they have no sufficient interest to keep the peace. Were marriage a trial, how often would it prove a failure! In France, on the other hand, partly because it has been thought barbarous to leave old people to live alone, partly from the very social habits of the people, partly from considerations of economy, an union of families has long been customary. Those, therefore, who are induced to associate, make up their minds permanently to dwell to-



gether, and though there may be drawbacks, they submit to what seems a necessity. The real advantages of the arrangement first suggested it, and the numerous examples around confirm the resolution. Moreover, that resolution once taken, it is looked upon as final, and for that reason the plan succeeds. The parties knowing that they are to pass their lives together, feel a mutual interest in making every thing as smooth as possible. Necessity, real or supposed, is the grand peacemaker. Besides, the love of the French for society, and the great want they feel when without it, prompt them from their earliest years to cultivate those qualities which render society agreeable, such as civility, forbearance, and mutual compliance. These qualities, the habit of their lives, they bring with them to their homes, and though they may not engender cordiality, they serve to keep the peace. Towards a woman, in particular, rarely can a Frenchman divest himself of politeness, however much he may dislike her; but an Englishman who loves not his wife or his female relation can hardly refrain from rudeness. The one loses all regard to sex; the other may hate, but still respects the lady.

In some countries, the tie of relationship is much more binding than in others, and unites a much wider circle. Scotland, in particular, has ever been remarkable for family attachment. Till the middle of last century, the state of that country, always more or less turbulent, rendered such connections of the greatest importance, whether for aggression or defence. This readily accounts for the origin of the peculiar regard

to family, and what began from necessity has been continued from custom, as well as from some secondary advantages. In England, where life and property have long been secured by law, we find no such clannish spirit.

This regard to relationship ought still to be considered a good ; for it is a source both of pleasure and profit. Thus a child enters the world not as an isolated being, but in the midst of a numerous circle, who, as one of their own, regard him with partiality, and favour his future advancement.

The strong family feeling that prevails in Scotland must be considered as a palliative to the evils of entails ; for the possessor of an entailed estate is, in a manner, considered as holding it in trust, not merely for his successors, but even for his contemporaries. Thus he is bound by opinion to keep open house for his relatives ; while they, on their side, think that they have a right to his hospitality, and consequently are not oppressed by such a feeling of obligation as might destroy the pleasure of intercourse. But it is not to them alone that this system is favourable. To a well constituted mind it must always be a source of delight to contribute to the gratification of others ; and to every mind, power or consequence is dear. Now consequence is obtained in two ways, either by a man's personal qualities and his possessions, or through a body to which he belongs. Thus every native of a state, every member of an aristocracy, every individual of a profession, has a weight in society, partly derived from his private merits and advantages, partly from his country, his order, or his

occupation. So, the possessor of an extensive landed property is regarded not merely on account of his qualities and his wealth, but also as the centre of a large family circle.

With respect to advancement in life, it is self-evident that a man with many friends, or at least relatives having some friendly feeling, has a great advantage ; for they lift him from the ground, and give him a point to stand on, whence he may soar to fortune. To become known is always difficult, even for a man of talent ; but the fewer his relations and acquaintances, the greater the difficulty. This is well seen in France at the present day, where the excessive subdivision of fortunes and the consequent dispersion of families have so much narrowed the circle of each man's society. To remedy the inconvenience attached to this state of things, literary men, in Paris, frequently form a sort of association known by the name of *Camaraderie*. But, having now got beyond the affections, I am warned that it is time to conclude.

### SECTION III.—*Desire of Power or Ambition.*

THE reader may feel surprised that we have dwelt so long upon the various modifications of love, and in particular upon the passion properly so called ; but his surprise will be diminished when he considers, in the first place, how important an element of human happiness is affection ; secondly, that love is the most violent, the most complicated, the most irregular, and

the most engrossing of the passions ; and, lastly, that much of what has been said of it is applicable to other desires. Thus love may be taken as a type or pattern of the other master passions, not indeed in all respects, but in many. Whatever passion may prevail, there is always a succession of hopes and fears, and fear seems necessary to keep alive the desire. Moreover, every passion is killed by despair, and weakened by security, as well as cherished by some degree of difficulty and uncertainty ; nurtured by partial fruition, but surfeited by excess. These applications the reader can easily make for himself, and therefore they need not here be further stated. Having, then, treated at large of the desires in general, and of love in particular as a sample of the passions, we may pass more rapidly over the others.

And here, in reference to the passions, we must make one general observation, which the reader will do well to bear in mind throughout ; namely, that there is scarcely one of them which has not been attacked and vilified by some moralist or satirist. One is for discarding love as folly in itself, and as a cause of imprudence ; another runs down ambition, desire of wealth, or of fame ; a third traduces even knowledge, and a fourth scoffs at all religious zeal, which he pleases to term superstition. Some, again, disparage the senses, others the imagination, and a few reason itself ; so that between them man bids fair to be left a being without body, parts, or passions.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Even the sagacious Butler shows a tendency to this system of exclusion when he talks of the imagination as “ that forward, delusive faculty, ever obtruding beyond its sphere ; of some as-

From what has been already said on desire in general, a ready answer may be given to these declamations. We have seen that desire is a very important element of human happiness; first, in itself, as an emotion; secondly, from its consequences, as the source of all activity. Without desire of some kind, man would be an inert, a joyless, and an useless being. But all men do not, and cannot, take an interest in the same things; nor probably is it to be wished that they should, and therefore a diversity of desires is unavoidable. Destroy this diversity, and you destroy a great part of the happiness of the

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sistance, indeed, to apprehension, but the author of all error." Analogy of Religion, Part i. chap. 1. Bacon, however, was of a different opinion, for he enumerates three distinct sources of error: "Regimen enim rationis impeti et perturbari videmus tribus modis: vel per *illaqueationem sophismatum*, quod ad *Dialecticam* pertinet; vel per præstigias verborum quod ad *Rhetoricam*; vel per affectuum violentiam, quod ad *Ethicam*." This is sound philosophy, not mere declamation. He then goes on to defend rhetoric which addresses itself to the imagination, and which he considers worthy to be mentioned along with dialectics and ethics. After stating the object of the two last, he says, "Finis denique rhetoricæ, phantasiam implere obversationibus et simulachris quæ rationi suppetias ferant, non autem eam opprimant." He argues in favour of rhetoric especially on this ground, that there is no one who does not speak more honourably than he either feels or acts; and, therefore, that rhetoric is more frequently employed in adorning virtue than vice: and he agrees with Cicero in his ridicule of the stoics, who sought to implant virtue in men's minds by means of concise and pithy sentences, which had no hold on the imagination or the will. He concludes thus, "Concludamas igitur non deberi magis vitio verti *Rhetoricæ*, quod deteriorem partem cohonestare sciat; quam *Dialecticæ*, quod Sophismata concinnare doceat." De Augm. Scient. lib. vi. cap. iii.

world, directly, as well as indirectly through the decline of activity, and reduce a large portion of mankind to the condition of the negro, who basks and sleeps in the sun. True, our desires may be abused, but so may every thing human; and we have seen that principles the most indispensable are precisely those most liable to abuse, because they are the most vigorous. The Author of Nature has guarded more strenuously against deficiency than excess; judging that the former was much the greater evil of the two. We must always go upon the principle that nothing has been made in vain, and if we agree to this axiom in general, and in reference to our bodily frame in particular, we cannot dispute it with respect to the mind. Therefore every faculty, every feeling, every desire, performs a useful purpose; and so dependent is one thing upon another, that probably no single principle of our nature could be eradicated without endangering the whole system. If any, one might think that desire of evil to others could be dispensed with, but were it so, a grand check to oppression and injustice would be taken away, and good or indolent men given up as a prey to those who would ill treat them with impunity; not, indeed, from a wish to injure, but to obtain their selfish ends. Extirpate desire of wealth, power, or fame, and you instantly reduce a large part of mankind to a truly deplorable state. Victims to ennui, and without any interest in life, they would be unhappy in themselves, indolent, and useless to others. General benevolence and desire of knowledge are, no doubt, superior principles, but still they are far from sufficient for the business

of the world, or to occupy the lives of all men. In short, since desire of some kind is necessary to activity, to virtue, and to happiness ; since all men cannot have the same desire, and since it is probable from analogy that not any was given in vain, we must conclude that every one may require regulation, but that none can or ought to be suppressed.

One circumstance which serves in part to explain the obloquy thrown on many of our desires is this, that mankind are much more struck by a few remarkable instances on one side than by innumerable though minor cases on the other ; and that the positive evil, excess, is more evident than the negative, deficiency. This is a grand source of fallacy. A few striking examples of evil produced by ambition, avarice, or love of glory, are sufficient to throw into the shade the numberless and every day benefits derived from these desires existing in a modified degree ; and when these principles are too weak, and ill consequences ensue, the cause, being negative, does not readily attract observation. It is only when the deficiency is extreme that the cause forces itself on our notice ; as in the case of slaves lately emancipated, who, from want of desire, refuse to work. This instance is enough to show us what would be the consequence of extirpating those active principles that are ridiculed by so many moralists, but which we are eager to restore whenever they are really lost.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> The following maxim of Rochefoucauld seems to me to contain a great truth : “ C’est se tromper que de croire qu’il n’y ait que les violentes passions, comme l’ambition et l’amour, qui puissent triompher des autres. La paresse, toute languis-

Another circumstance which helps to account for the abuse heaped upon human nature in general, and on the desires in particular, is the love of satire in man, which may be traced to the love of superiority; for he who vilifies or laughs at the common pursuits of his fellows, seems, by so doing, to place himself far above them. He appears to be placed on a lofty pinnacle

“ Despicere unde queas alios, passimque videre  
Errare, atque viam palanteis quærere vitæ.”<sup>57</sup>

The passion now to be considered, is desire of power, or Ambition. This is the correct meaning of the word ambition, though it is often used in a more vague and extended sense, for desire of superiority in general. Thus we talk of a man being ambitious of wealth, of fame, of high alliance, or any other distinction. But in the following remarks the term is limited to its proper signification, desire of power.

Power, in one shape or other, being very generally desired by men, and by some with an intense and permanent ardour; it must be connected with some great pleasure or advantage. We shall therefore consider in the first place, what are the elements of the

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sante qu'elle est, ne laisse pas d'en être souvent la maîtresse; elle usurpe sur tous les desseins et sur toutes les actions de la vie; elle y détruit et y consume insensiblement les passions et les vertus.” *Max.* 274. It is indeed singular to hear some moralists run down desire as well as indolence, forgetting that the one is the only remedy for the other. Again, “ Les passions de la jeunesse ne sont guère plus opposées au salut que la tiédeur des vieilles gens.” *Max.* 348.

<sup>57</sup> Lucretius, lib. ii.



pleasure of power, and then we may trace the origin and some of the consequences of ambition.

Why is power agreeable? or in other words, what are the elements of the pleasure it confers?

It cannot be denied that a sensible pleasure is derived from the reflection, that we have exerted our faculties, whether of mind or body, in any way whatsoever. To have *done* something is of itself an agreeable thought.

This gratification is different from the pleasure connected with activity in the pursuit, for we feel it not till the action is over; and it is also different from self-approbation of virtuous conduct, for we experience it where no virtuous effort has been made. To write a book, to paint a picture, to travel on foot over some difficult country, cannot of themselves be called virtuous deeds, independently of the intention, but they give rise when completed to a self-satisfied feeling. We have made use of our faculties, we have done something, and that is sufficient. Though the pleasure of activity be past, though no lasting good should result from it, and though we had no benevolent end in view, we still rejoice in the thought that we have exerted power.<sup>58</sup> This pleasure is, no doubt, frequently connected with the self-approbation of virtue, and therefore is apt to be confounded with it; but from what has now been said, we perceive that it is really distinct. It differs also from delight in superiority, for we feel it where no comparison is made with others, and where no influence has been

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<sup>58</sup> *Acti labores sunt jucundi*, says the Latin axiom.

exerted over them. This then is the feeling *peculiar* to power, for which it is valued in the first instance ; and it seems to be elementary, and so admits not of analysis.

Secondly, power is valued because it confers superiority over others. We have seen that there is no pursuit, however trivial, no good, however insignificant, which may not minister to this universal passion ; but power or dominion, and superiority are almost the same thing. Power over self may, indeed, be exercised and delighted in without supposing any comparison ; but power over others is always a marked superiority, and is accordingly prized as such.

Lastly, power is valued on account of its results, for as the very term implies, it leads to almost every gratification ; to fame, wealth, and all that wealth can bestow.

Such are the three elements of the pleasure of power. It is agreeable, partly from a feeling peculiar to itself, partly from the superiority it gives, and partly from its consequences.

The pleasures of ambition are certainly less intense than those of love, and it is also less violent and engrossing ; but on the other hand, it is a far more durable passion. Were there any doubt whether the pleasures of ambition be inferior to those of love in intensity, it ought to be dispelled by this consideration, that the delights of the former are in their nature solitary, while those of the latter are *shared with another*. This is a circumstance of such importance as would suffice to decide the question, should it ever be raised. The most ambitious of

men was arrested for a while, in the midst of his conquests, by the charms of Cleopatra; and another, scarcely less aspiring, lost an empire for her sake.

Ambition is also less violent and engrossing than love or religious enthusiasm. That ambition is less violent and absorbing at any one time, is proved by this circumstance; that men do not literally become mad, or die from it, as from the two others. Metaphorically speaking, men are sometimes said to be mad from ambition, that is, they are led by it blindly to their ruin; but between error or imprudence and insanity, there is a wide difference. Neither do people die of this passion as they may from disappointed love.

But if ambition be less violent and less absorbing at any one time than love, it greatly surpasses it in durability. In truth, this and avarice seem to be the most lasting of all the passions.

Roche foucauld has said, "We often pass from love to ambition; but scarcely do we return from ambition to love."<sup>59</sup> With many, love is but an episode, ambition, the main story of their lives. It may begin early in youth, but it seldom arrives at maturity until a much later period, and even after middle age it often continues to increase. Julius Cæsar, certainly as ambitious a man as the world ever saw, was forty-three years old before he began that series of achievements which has rendered his name so remarkable; and he was turned of fifty ere he undertook to make himself master of the state. Not content with the undisputed

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<sup>59</sup> On passe souvent de l'amour à l'ambition; mais on ne revient guère de l'ambition à l'amour. *Maximes*.

possession of the Roman world, he is said, just before his death, to have been meditating an expedition against the Parthians. Tamerlane, after conquering great part of Asia, set out to invade China at the age of seventy, when death put a stop to his career. The ambition of Napoleon grew more and more as he advanced in conquests and in years, and had he subdued Russia, he would have panted for something beyond. Thus, the son of Philip is said to have wept, that he had no more realms to vanquish.

A few examples, indeed, may be brought forward, of persons who, having enjoyed great power, voluntarily gave it up and retired, fatigued or disappointed, as Sylla, Diocletian, and Charles V. But these instances are rare, and rarer still are the cases where repentance has not ensued. Some who had resigned power, afterwards attempted to regain it; and others, like Sylla, did not long survive their abdication. That must be no ordinary mind which, after all the excitements of ambition and all the pride of power, can find interest in a life of tranquillity. Such, indeed, was Washington, who, quitting the tumults of war, and the enjoyments of the highest office, could retire to his farm on the Potowmack, and delight in agricultural pursuits. But the world has, as yet, seen only one Washington; though, in this particular, the example of Diocletian is far more remarkable.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> The example of Diocletian is, all things considered, probably the most striking in history. Such an action, as Gibbon has observed, was "more naturally to have been expected from the elder or the younger Antoninus, than from a prince who had never practised the lessons of philosophy, either in the attainment

Ambition has its pains, and often great pains, and so has love ; but how few, having felt these passions, ever ceased to regret their absence ? <sup>61</sup>

On what does this durability of the passion ambition depend ? It depends, I conceive, on the constant activity to which it gives rise. The object of ambition can seldom be obtained without reflection, frequent, long, and deep, and a series of active efforts ; and this thoughtfulness and exertion being all employed about the prevailing passion, they serve to fix it in the soul. Want of occupation never fails to subdue passion, but this is a want which ambition cannot feel. So long as power is difficult of attainment or difficult to keep, so long as competitors are to be got rid of, or any new height of power remains unreachd, so long will the faculties be kept on the stretch and employed about ambition. And this brings me to remark the source of this activity, which evidently springs from hope, the hope of something

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or in the use of supreme power." Decline and Fall, ch. xiii. The example is alike singular, whether we consider the height from which Diocletian descended and the uninterrupted success of his reign, his want of taste for science or literature, or his contentment in retirement, which lasted nine years. We are told by the above historian, that " he had preserved, or at least he soon recovered, a taste for the most innocent, as well as natural pleasures, and his leisure hours were sufficiently employed in building, planting, and gardening." Ibid. His colleague Maximian, who had been induced to resign at the same time, took the earliest opportunity of regaining his power ; he twice laid down, and twice reassumed the purple.

<sup>61</sup> Rochefoucauld has said ; " Ceux qui ont eu de grandes passions se trouvent, toute leur vie, heureux et malheureux d'en être guëris." *Maxime* 508.

beyond. In love, so long as the object is unattained, passion may be kept up from the hope of future enjoyment; but when the idol is won, desire loses its point, and is often swallowed up in possession. But power from its very nature cannot thus be gained at once. It is like a journey divided into many stages, each of which leads on to another; and a journey so long, that life may end before we reach the termination. Thus, no sooner have we gained one eminence of power than we instantly descry another, which of course we are eager to reach, and so on indefinitely. It is this progressive and indefinite nature of the object which keeps us constantly in movement, bodily and mentally, desiring, acting, attaining, in a ceaseless and never-ending race. The existence of something beyond constantly stimulates desire, desire promotes activity, and this again increases the ruling passion.

Moreover, every new acquisition of power is accompanied with a degree of pleasure, which serves like sufficient fuel to feed, but not smother, the fire, or acts like a wholesome meal that adds fresh vigour to the frame. The enjoyment which ambition affords is always partial, never complete like that of love, and therefore, instead of satiety, it creates a desire for more; for every passion, though surfeited by excess, is fostered by some fruition.

The love of power originates in our early years, and is first displayed in the efforts of the child, who must be doing something. This tendency may be traced almost from the period of infancy, and it frequently is very troublesome to grown up people, who

are unwilling to permit the awkward and often hazardous attempts of those little bustling creatures, who are never so happy as when allowed to imitate the actions of their elders. They thus early feel a sense of importance from the exercise of their own childish powers, which grows with their years and strength, and readily gives rise to the wish for obtaining dominion over others. Could we trace the history of any remarkable conqueror up to infant days, we might discover that thirst for rule which was afterwards to desolate the world, beginning in the urchin who was ambitious to perform of himself any common domestic office, such as men are used to discharge.

We have seen that the love of liberty is connected with that of power, inasmuch as the desire of absence of restraint for ourselves easily passes into the wish of exercising restraint over others, without which, indeed, our liberty cannot be complete, except in a state of solitude: for in the social state, as I have elsewhere remarked,<sup>8</sup> the perfect liberty of one would be the perfect slavery of all others. So long as the will of one man is different from that of another, so long must we expect opposition; and every opposition impedes our doing as we please, or, in other words, breaks in upon our liberty, and is disliked accordingly. Consequently it becomes desirable to get rid of the obstacle, and for this purpose power is necessary. Therefore the desire of power flows directly from that of liberty. We have before observed, that great sticklers for the latter have frequently been

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<sup>8</sup> Political Discourses. On Civil Liberty, ch. i.

remarked to be despotically inclined, so far as their sphere extended; and of this we have a wide and striking instance in North America, where liberty and slavery are defended in the same breath. Ardently to desire freedom for self, and yet to respect that of others, must be allowed to be no easy task, for the two are constantly apt to interfere; and the stronger the selfish feeling, the less readily will it yield to the social. Universal liberty at a distance, or where we expect to gain by it, may be admired without difficulty, as a slave-holder in the colonies might have been a radical at home: but our own practice is liable to be perverted to the contrary by that very principle which we profess to extend to all, but really limit to self.

Power may be sought and obtained in various ways; through the affections, by exciting sudden emotions, by superior intelligence or persuasion, by reward or punishment giving rise to hope or fear, and, lastly, by physical force. The empire which women exercise is chiefly founded on the first; and the less it is perceptible, the more is it undisputed.

“ And if she rules him, never shows she rules;”

as both good taste and good policy dictate; for the spectator is revolted, and the governed roused to rebellion by an open display of female domination. The power of orators, again, is obtained by eloquence and persuasion, or in other words, through sudden emotions and reason; sometimes more by the one, sometimes by the other, according to the genius of the speaker, or the audience whom he may address. He who declaims before a small and se-



lect body will generally try to convince ; he who harangues a mob will aim at rousing the passions. The power obtained in the former way is better suited for quiet times, and is then commonly more lasting ; but in tumultuous periods it will yield to the influence of the demagogue who can kindle a fire among the many. In our own days, the peculiar circumstances of Ireland, and the oratorical talents of an individual, combined to confer upon him a power which could move a nation at will.

The philosopher, on the other hand, addresses himself to the reason alone, and therefore his dominion is founded laboriously and increases by slow degrees, like every thing that is to last ; for it is a general law of nature that whatever is meant to be durable is long of coming to maturity. This may be observed in plants and animals, in the physical as well as the moral world. The poplar and pine spring up rapidly, while the oak is extremely slow ; but the former decay within the century, while the latter may endure for many. The horse is full grown at four or five, and seldom lives much beyond twenty ; while man who increases till seventeen or eighteen, often reaches fourscore. So it is with other plants and animals, and so likewise in the moral and political world. A very precocious child generally disappoints expectation, and those whose talents have shone conspicuous in early life rarely reach an advanced age, or maintain their excellence to the last.\* Zenghis Khan or

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\* Hobbes is a most remarkable instance of tardy development, for we are told that he began to educate himself at thirty, published his translation of Thucydides at forty, his philosophical works not till sixty, and lived to upwards of ninety.

Tamerlane might subdue half Asia in a life-time, as Napoleon did half of Europe ; but when the founder sank into the grave, his empire crumbled into dust. On the contrary, the Roman power rose at first by imperceptible degrees, increased during six hundred years, continued long unimpaired, slowly declined, and was not finally extinguished till the lapse of twelve centuries.

Reward and punishment, giving rise to hope and fear, are the most common means by which power is sought and acquired. The power of a father over his family, of a schoolmaster over his boys, of an officer over his men, of a government over its subjects, are all founded upon these, partially, if not entirely. And here we may remark that as man has much more scope for conferring pain than pleasure, punishment must be a far more powerful engine than reward, fear than hope. Whatever may be the resources of a government, however great its patronage, it can operate in this way on a very small part of a nation ; but by means of fear it can exert an influence on every individual. Accordingly, reward acts but a very subordinate part in the laws of any country ; though as Bentham supposes, it might be more employed. Still, as compared with punishment, it must always be a weak contrivance. Since the revenue of any government is soon exhausted, and cannot be increased without impoverishing the people, and thus creating more foes than friends, honorary distinctions have been fallen upon to increase the power obtained by means of reward. Hence, crosses and ribbons, which flatter the vanity of some, and so strengthen

the existing government, without causing discontent in another quarter. The eagerness with which they are sought may often excite a smile ; but while we laugh at the weakness of men, we can pardon those rulers who adopt a cheap expedient for turning it to their own advantage, if not to that of the people.

One man's physical force can go but a little way ; no where probably more than at school, where the big bully beats the trembling boy. But an immense power may be obtained by him who can command the physical force of many, in whatever way such influence may be gained, whether by affection, sudden impulse,\* persuasion, reward or punishment, or by all these means united. Physical force, then, to any extent, is always the result of a moral influence over the minds of others ; and, consequently, all government, despotic or free, is founded on a moral basis. The tyrant, whose throne is surrounded by armed hosts, or the chief magistrate who sits under a constable's staff, alike derive their authority from feelings existing in the minds of their fellow-men. The only difference is this, that the one rules the few directly, and the many indirectly through the physical force of those few who by union may be far the stronger ;

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\* The power of Napoleon, for instance, was founded in a great degree on what I here call impulse ; for he lived by satisfying the national passion for glory : while that of the kings of France before the revolution rested much on affection ; for even now a considerable party in France has a real love for the family of their former princes,<sup>i</sup> such as many in Great Britain once felt for the Stuarts.

while the other governs the many directly without the intervening force.

From what has now been said, we may draw this conclusion,—that a government which aims at permanence must seek for power in every variety of way. That government will be the strongest which lives in the affections of its subjects, flatters their leading propensities, is approved by their sober judgment, supported by extensive patronage, the terrors of law, and the swords of a well-disciplined army. Should, then, any sort of government from its very nature exclude any of these means of influence, so far it must be less secure. Thus a despotic monarchy cannot address itself to the reason of its subjects, for the principle that one should rule irresponsibly over many, is utterly contrary to reason; nor can a pure republic maintain a considerable army without causing more danger than it prevents. Therefore neither of these forms can be the most secure. On the other hand, a mixed government, like that of Great Britain, seems to admit of every means of influence, and on that account it seems better calculated for stability than either of the two extremes.

In discussing the consequences of the love of power, we shall do well to consider, in the first place, how it bears upon the affections. We may remark, then, that affection is greatly promoted by the power of benefiting. The pleasure which we derive from the exercise of power increases the kindly feeling that serves as an occasion for calling it forth. In other words, we love persons the more because they have given us an opportunity of gratifying a leading

propensity of our nature. Hence the affection of him who confers benefits is generally greater than that of him who receives them: The one is pleased by his superiority, while the other is apt to be pained by his inferiority; so that, in the former case, the connection is altogether agreeable, in the latter of a mixed character.

This is one reason why love is greater on the part of parents than of children, why it declines as sons and daughters grow up, and why children or wives who are sickly and give the most trouble are often the most adored. Parents and husbands delight in supporting the weak, for thus they become conscious of power. Man is less liable to be taken with masculine women, or with those who have natural protectors, than with the delicate, the helpless, and dependent, who look up to him alone. Hence girls without father or brother are regarded with peculiar interest, and, other things being equal, are more likely to marry than those who have one or both. But where there are many sisters, they are apt to marry more slowly, for numbers less require a protector.

In these and similar cases, the love of power serves a most useful purpose, and, according to the intentions of our Creator, combines with pity in prompting us to assist the helpless. It is interesting as well as improving to ascend occasionally to first causes, and discover proofs of the wisdom and goodness of the Deity in the workings of those very passions which have so often been condemned indiscriminately.

In estimating the consequences of ambition, as it

concerns the happiness of the individual himself, or of those with whom he is connected, we are chiefly exposed to error from limiting our view to a few remarkable cases, forgetting that the passion in question, in some shape or other, pervades all human society, and may be traced in the cottage as well as the palace, in the village as well as the city, in private as in public life. The petty magistrate or country justice, and the ruler of a hundred provinces, are both alive to its influence. In one, it may be only sufficient to rouse to useful exertion, while in another it swells into an ungovernable desire which strews the world with ruins.

The first use of ambition, as of other leading passions, is, to animate and occupy the mind, and thus to expel ennui, and the whole host of imaginary ills which are apt to beset those who have no sufficient interest. Some are more prone to ennui, others to visionary evils; but as soon as ambition is felt, or any strong desire, the mind rises from its lethargy, "like a giant refreshed with wine." No longer sunk in languor, nor feeding on its own distempered thoughts, it swells with a lofty purpose, and rejoices in conscious force. So much of what has been said on desire in general is applicable to ambition in particular, that we need not now enter into any long developement; and therefore we may go on to observe, secondly, that ambition leads to activity, and that activity is agreeable in itself, and essential to all personal success as well as to our general usefulness. We ought never to forget that indolence is our greatest enemy; for it both destroys our own happi-

ness and renders us incapable of contributing to that of others. Moreover it is a foe whose attacks, though slow, are insidious and incessant, and therefore the more to be feared. It besets us at all times and on all occasions, and, without a powerful antagonist, is sure at last to gain the victory by dint of constant repetition. Like other propensities, love of ease is not backward in suggesting arguments in its own favour, and is fond of dignifying indolence with the name of virtue, or moderation. This, then, is the ground on which ambition and other passions may best be defended. Whatever may be the excesses into which they are apt to run, they are necessary to produce action, and action is essential to virtue, usefulness, and happiness.<sup>11</sup>

Since we cannot desire any thing very strongly without fearing to lose it, all the passions tend to anxiety, but ambition in a peculiar degree. This constitutes the chief drawback to the happiness derived from desire, and as ambition seems more exposed to it than any other, so far it is less favourable to felicity. The anxiety connected with ambition depends, no doubt, upon the strength of the desire, but partly also on other and peculiar causes, such as the uncertainty of getting and retaining

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<sup>11</sup> De tous nos défauts celui dont nous demeurons le plus aisément d'accord, c'est la paresse : nous nous persuadons qu'elle tient à toutes les vertus paisibles, et que, sans détruire entièrement les autres, elle en suspend seulement les fonctions. *Roche-foucauld Max.* 420.

Pendant que la paresse et la timidité nous retiennent dans notre devoir, notre vertu en a souvent tout l'honneur. *Id. Max.* 169.

power, arising from the number of competitors to be set aside, and the envy which high station creates. The ambitious man is never at rest, he lives in a perpetual fever of hopes and fears, and is often worn down prematurely by this constant agitation ; but he knows not the miseries of languor, nor the phantoms of an unoccupied brain.

As an assistant to the other desires of our nature which of themselves might be too weak, love of power is highly beneficial; because, while it rouses the mind, it is at the same time kept in check by opposing principles. Thus, general benevolence or even desire of virtuous reputation might not alone suffice to stimulate to useful exertion ; but when aided by love of power, they may move the whole man. This co-operation, however, is only to a certain extent, or in a certain direction ; for no sooner does ambition seek for improper means, or point to unworthy objects, than it is instantly checked by the other principles. It is only when ambition becomes the sole ruling passion that the consequences are truly alarming. Then indeed it is a tyrant which beginning from its dominion over the individual may not cease till it has spread its ravages over the fairest provinces of the earth. Subduing the sentiments of humanity, and stifling the voice of conscience, it deluges the world with blood.

Such are the extreme evils of the thirst for power. But power when actually attained is also a dangerous possession ; for nothing has such an effect on the character ; and by it dispositions naturally amiable have often been so changed as not to be known for the



same. Tacitus says that Vespasian was the only prince who had ever grown better in the exercise of supreme power ; but if we add Gelon of Syracuse, we shall probably be at a loss for a third : while examples of the contrary are endless. This tendency of unchecked power to corrupt the character is one of the strongest arguments against despotism, for what must be the condition of the people when bound to obey a ruler who can hardly be a virtuous man ? The influence of supreme power on the character may be thus explained. Where the authority of the prince is not securely founded, fear is the grand cause of cruelty ; and where it is, there is no occasion for self-restraint. The despot knowing that he may do as he pleases, becomes accustomed to follow every fancy, and when he unexpectedly meets with any opposition or delay, he resents it as a positive injury, because he has been used to consider implicit obedience his right. Therefore in punishing the erring individual he seems to himself to be doing only an act of justice. On the one hand, being accustomed to indulge his passions, he is the less able to control them ; and on the other, his moral judgment being blinded, he does not even make the attempt.

The evils of inordinate ambition and of despotic rule are so generally known and acknowledged that it is needless to dwell any longer on them ; but we must not allow ourselves to forget that there is also a laudable ambition, and that men who have talents to command should not be content in obscurity. Strong love of power being generally accompanied with more than ordinary intellectual faculties, it serves,

along with other motives, to bring forward into public life men who without such a stimulus might for ever have been lost to their country. Those who might not have stirred from patriotism or love of fame may be awakened by the call of ambition.

In conclusion, it is only necessary to remark that the evils of an undue thirst for power are not confined to high station or public life ; but may be seen in every rank and in the daily intercourse of society. These evils, indeed, are limited by the sphere in which the actors move, and what in one position is a widely destructive passion, becomes in another a petty and troublesome spirit of rule ; differing from the former as the rage of the lion differs from the malice of the wasp. Thus we sometimes meet with people who have a mania for directing every thing from important affairs down to the most minute ; who cannot see a person proceeding in one direction without urging him to go in another. Such individuals live upon fault-finding, for nothing is right but what they have done themselves. There is really no pleasing these persons, unless one consent to be directed and marshalled by them on all occasions. This petty ambition must be allowed to be very annoying, and is often given in to for the sake of avoiding disputes, and so is encouraged ; whereas it ought to be repressed by ridicule or neglect.

SECTION IV.—*Desire of Wealth, Covetousness, Avarice.*

IN considering desire of wealth in general, and that extreme form of it in particular known by the name Avarice, we shall adopt, as far as possible, the method already used in treating of love and ambition ; and shall first analyse and describe the passion, then trace its origin and growth, and lastly pass on to its consequences.

Why is wealth agreeable ? or, in other words, what are the elements of the pleasure of wealth ?

It is evident, in the first place, that desire of wealth is not an original passion like love or ambition, which have pleasures connected with them independently of their consequences ; affection and power being in themselves delightful, whereas wealth in the beginning has no peculiar charms. It is then sought entirely as means to an end, for the purpose of satisfying our wants and ministering to our enjoyments ; that is, in order to gratify other and primary desires. At first, the pangs of hunger and cold create in the savage a desire for food, clothes, and lodging ; and in a more advanced state of society, there arises a wish for luxuries, indulgences, amusements, education, knowledge, and leisure, to be obtained through the medium of wealth. Thus wealth is coveted for the sake of warding off the pains of want, and preserving life, for the gratifications of sense, for amusement, ease, and knowledge, which are primary pleasures of our nature. So far riches are valued only as means to an end.

Secondly, wealth being the means of so much good, not only directly to our bodily frame and sensual nature, but indirectly to our moral and intellectual existence, being possessed by different persons in very different degrees, and obtained at first at least, by industry and praiseworthy qualities, being moreover material, and therefore tangible and conspicuous, it soon came to be esteemed as a mark of superiority. Here riches are valued not for their proper use, but because they serve to gratify an universal passion of our nature. Still, even in this case they are prized only as means.

Thus far all is plain enough; but lastly we meet with a case which certainly seems somewhat singular, and difficult of explanation, the case in which the end seems almost, or altogether lost sight of, and riches come to be valued for their own sake. This properly is avarice. The miser alone hugs wealth for itself; but all men love power: the one is a derived taste, the other original. Thus love of riches in general and particularly of money, becomes in some a distinct passion, different from the primary desires in which it originated, and on that account it deserves a separate consideration.

How then comes it to pass that wealth, the means, may be valued almost, or altogether, independently of the end, at least without employing it towards that end; in other words, what are the elements of the pleasure of having and accumulating as distinct from spending and consuming.

There is no more common tendency of our nature, than to substitute the means for the end. This is

not surprising when we consider that we are chiefly occupied about the former, while the latter is only now and then brought into view. Whatever may be the pursuit in which we are engaged, so long as it lasts, the means must chiefly engross our attention, for thus alone can the end be reached ; and those being so much pondered on, they acquire in consequence an exaggerated importance, so as even to put the end out of view, for a longer or shorter time. Happiness is said to be “ our being’s end and aim,” but how often in the business of the world does it seem to be over-looked !

This substitution of the means for the end is an exceedingly general and copious source of fallacy in reasoning, as well as of error in practice, and therefore it ought to be largely dwelt on in works of logic or morals. In no case is it seen more remarkably than in love of money for its own sake. Wealth, and money in particular, being associated with most of the pleasures of life, it becomes on that account agreeable in itself, at first by a momentary delusion, which may however become permanent. Objects, properly insignificant, may be dear to us when only casually associated with scenes of past pleasure, or with persons whom we love ; and therefore it cannot surprise us that wealth, which is necessarily connected with enjoyment, should itself share in our regard. Moreover, those who are employed in any profitable business, are of course constantly handling, thinking, and talking of money, and other property, and scheming to increase their store ; till at last, these means of well-being may so completely occupy the

mind, as to prevent it from seeing the end, except at distant intervals. So far then the love of money for itself depends upon the two great principles of Association and Occupation.

The truth of this account will the more appear when we consider that money, though only one species of wealth, was long considered as the only, or at least the principal one, by writers on trade and commerce, as well as by practical men; and therefore the grand way to enrich a nation was to amass gold and silver. Hence the commercial system, as it is called, the object of which was to increase exports and diminish imports, in order that there might always be a balance due to be paid, as was supposed, in the precious metals. Nothing can more clearly show the tendency of man to substitute the means for the end; for money being the medium by which all other riches might be procured came itself to be thought the whole.

These principles account for the origin of the desire of wealth for its own sake; but they are insufficient to explain that inordinate and eccentric love for it which is felt by the miser, who hoards and hoards eternally, and grudges every shilling he spends. Wealth as such, independently of its use, must flatter some very strong propensity of our nature, or it never could be thus adored.

We may remark, that the miser's passion is in an especial manner for money, or for some very permanent sort of property, such as land, and keeping this in mind, we shall perhaps be able to arrive at the true account of the matter.

Money being the universal medium or means of

exchange, it becomes for that reason peculiarly esteemed, because we know that by it we can procure whatever we please, and when we please. Hence the seller of goods always considers himself obliged to the seller of money, that is, to the buyer of the goods, and thanks him accordingly ; though, in fair trade, the value on both sides is the same ; and hence also, as we have seen, gold and silver were once considered as the chief or only wealth. Money, then, being an instrument by which almost every thing may be turned to our use, commodities, labour, skilled and unskilled, intellectual talents as well as manual dexterity, it is looked upon as equivalent to power, and is valued accordingly. Now the consciousness of power is agreeable, independently of the exercise thereof ; and therefore the possession of wealth, which confers power, is also satisfactory to the mind, though it should never be actually employed in obtaining dominion over others. And as every expense tends to lessen wealth, and hence to diminish future power, therefore expense is shunned, and regretted when inevitable. Thus love of wealth, and of money in particular, depends in part, at least, upon love of power.

Again, money or land is permanent, and on that account gives a feeling of security from indigence or want. This feeling, in particular, seems to me the chief pleasure attached to the passion of avarice, though the other must not be overlooked. Avarice increases with age, and so does love of power ; and the increase of the latter favours the growth of the former.

Further, fear, or want of security, increases with age ; and therefore property, which confers security, comes to be more and more valued. If the young and active be seldom avaricious, it is owing partly to this, that having a confidence in their own powers, they are rather rash than timid ; as in America, where every man can easily gain his livelihood, there is a prodigious activity in acquiring money, but little strict economy, and less avarice, because there is little fear. In short, the pleasure of having and accumulating, as distinct from that of spending, seems to be composed of two elements, a pleasure of power, and a pleasure of security, and the latter appears the principal. The dread of spending, which always accompanies avarice, arises from false notions of insecurity more than from an attachment to power, the loss of a portion of which might indeed occasion regret, but could scarcely create such alarm as the miser is wont to feel when forced to draw his purse. In the midst of riches, he fancies himself on the verge of ruin, and when he could command the attentions of hundreds, he fears that he may die in a ditch.

Now, then, we perceive what it is which compensates the miser for his endless privations. The feeling of power and that of security are his only pleasures, and rather than forego these, he will abstain from all use of his riches.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The following anecdote is characteristic. A certain miser being asked why he took such pains to amass that wealth which his son would certainly spend after his death, he answered, " Let him spend it ; but he will never have so much pleasure in spend-



Wealth is obtained first by industry, and is afterwards increased by industry and economy. No riches could exist without labour, nor could labour be of much avail without some capital to aid it, and capital comes by saving. Moreover, when a man has amassed by labour a certain capital, he may lend it to be employed by others, and live upon what he bargains to receive for it; and out of this revenue he may still continue to save, to lend, to receive, and save again. Thus there are two ways of getting rich, and both must contribute at first to amass a fortune; but after a time, economy alone will suffice.

Now we shall find that love of wealth exhibits two striking varieties, according to the mode of acquiring it; the one being an eagerness in getting, the other an aversion to spending; the former known by the name of Covetousness or Cupidity, the other by the terms Frugality, Parsimony, Narrowness, and Avarice, which differ chiefly in degree. The covetous person desires wealth extremely, and will make the greatest exertions to obtain it; but he may spend as liberally: whereas the miser may be doing little, but he always saves with avidity. Both greatly value riches; but the one for their uses, the other for their own sake.

It is certainly conceivable that the two characters may be united, that the covetous man may also be a miser; but rarely, I think, do we observe them in one person, at least in an extreme degree. Generally

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ing as I in accumulating." There is assuredly a positive pleasure in accumulating, independently of the pains of humiliation and insecurity which thus are warded off.

speaking, activity in getting and parsimony in spending belong to different orders of mind, or to the same mind at different periods. Thus a man who was very covetous in his youth may become a miser in his old age, when retired from active life. No people are more eager after money, or more enterprising in the pursuit of it, than the Americans, yet they spend liberally; while the French are comparatively inactive and timid in industry, but strictly economical. The very activity of business is opposed to avarice, because it occupies the intellectual faculties, and so prevents the mind from being completely engrossed by the passion; whereas in retirement it may absorb the whole man. Those who in early life were employed in making a fortune are very liable to avarice after they quit the busy scene; because their thoughts naturally recur to that which has been the constant object of their lives, and they seldom have other tastes sufficient to fill up existence. Hoarding becomes now their chief interest, as getting was formerly. Still more commonly those who have risen to wealth laboriously, and by slow degrees, continue frugal to the last, merely from habit; for wealth coming upon them by imperceptible degrees, they never see a decided reason for changing their mode of life, and so go on as before. In order to break a habit, sudden change is necessary, but in their case it never occurs, and, therefore, they make no great change in their expenses. We have heard of a grocer that died a few years ago in London worth eight hundred thousand pounds, who lived no better than a common shopkeeper. In this and many similar cases, frugality is not avarice, for

it arises more from habit, and an indifference to unknown and costly pleasures, than from an over-weening love of money.

Those, on the other hand, who are born to wealth, or become suddenly rich, are frequently prodigals ; for we value that little which has cost us little or nothing ; while they who rise laboriously to fortune esteem and preserve it on the opposite principle. This is another reason for the frugality of those who have risen by their own exertions. Sudden elevation, on the contrary, is always dangerous, and sometimes fatal ; as many a man has been ruined by a high prize in the lottery. But when a man advanced in years suddenly becomes rich, he does not so readily change ; for with the old, custom is omnipotent.

Those, again, who hold their riches by a very uncertain tenure, who embark in such speculations as may either ruin or make them, are generally very liberal, not to say extravagant ; for their maxim is, let us enjoy ourselves to-day, for we may not be able to-morrow. If our plans succeed, this expense will make little difference ; if not, we shall be no worse off. Hence merchants in the foreign trade are generally free in spending ; and airy speculators of all kinds are noted for their want of economy. This may be particularly remarked during those periods of excitement which are seen every now and then in great commercial countries, and are called bubble years, when a rage for adventure and extravagance in expenditure always go hand in hand. In such cases, want of security is the real cause of the phenomenon. This effect of insecurity was most strik-

ingly seen in France during the reign of terror ; for, as M. Say informs us, who had witnessed that awful period, there was then a fury for expense such as almost exceeds belief. Life and property were then felt to be so uncertain, that there was no inducement to save, but every motive to spend, and make the most of the present. The epicurean maxim, “ Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die,” was then really acted up to ; and not only revenue, but capital, diffused with a lavish hand. It seemed as if people thought they could not too quickly get rid of their fortune, in endeavouring to concentrate in a month, week, or day, the enjoyments of many years. Such was the consequence of insecurity.

The pleasures connected with love of wealth seem to be less intense than those of ambition. There is something much more vague and mysterious in power than in wealth, which is material and palpable ; and therefore the former gives more scope to the imagination, and may be clothed in more enchanting colours. The one is as a whirlwind which lifts a man in air ; while the other is but a hurricane which drives him along the face of the earth. The votary of wealth feels not the same “ exulting sense,” nor does his pulse beat with the same “ maddening play” as thrills the votary of power.

On the other hand this passion is fully as permanent as ambition, or rather more so, and, like it, increases with age, but still more surely and constantly. Desire of riches, like desire of power, may indeed commence in youth, but a young miser would be a wonderful phenomenon ; whereas avarice in old age

causes no surprise, and after a time is generally considered incurable. By repeated disappointments, ambition may sometimes be subdued, but avarice continues to the grave. The causes of this permanence are the same in both cases, and have been stated in the former section, to which I may refer the reader. The fundamental cause is this, that in the pursuit of wealth, as of power, there is always something beyond which serves to rouse our wishes, to employ our intellect, and through it react upon desire ; and so draw us on indefinitely. And this is still more the case in the present instance than in the former, for a man may be arrested in an ambitious course by the impossibility of further advancement, but to the increase of riches there is evidently no limit. The greatest sum which any man can scrape together must be a mere atom as compared with what still remains to be accumulated. Avarice then is insatiable, because its object is infinite ; whereas love, which has a definite end, may enjoy a perfect satisfaction, and afterwards come to a close.

Avarice, like ambition and other passions, is increased by partial indulgence ; and as in this case indulgence is always partial, every increase of wealth feeds, but cannot satisfy. “*Crescit amor nummi quantum ipsa pecunia crescit*,” has become proverbial. Hence an increase of fortune sometimes gives rise to a passion hitherto unknown, or dormant ; for it creates the possibility and hence the desire of accumulation, which could not grow up so long as the means were sufficient only for daily expenses. It seems hardly worth while to save a trifle, and there-

fore that trifle is not saved, and consequently there can be no passion for money ; but when something more can be laid by, something frequently is laid by, and thus the taste begins. For this reason, the poorest class in any nation is generally the most improvident, and the poorer, the more prodigal, as we see in the working people of England, who are less prudent than the middle ranks, and in the labourers of Ireland who are far more reckless than those of Great Britain. Whatever facilitates saving tends to encourage the love of money, and hence the institution of savings banks has spread it far and wide.

In analyzing the love of wealth, we traced its origin to the pleasing associations with which it is early connected, and to the occupation which it gives to the mind. These early associations connected with wealth in general are afterwards greatly assisted by feelings of power and security, arising from the possession of any durable riches, of money in particular, which is not only very durable, but the medium for compassing all things. Here, however, as elsewhere, pain treads upon the heels of pleasure ; for if enjoyment be connected with the possession of wealth, misery is linked with the want thereof. The privations, humiliations, and insecurity to which poverty is exposed, as well as the regret consequent upon any foolish expense that has brought us into difficulties, associate pain with the absence of wealth in general, and of money in particular ; and hence create a love for that which is to rid us of such evils. And as pain to be avoided affords a more powerful motive to action than pleasure to be attained, it is probable

that avarice is fostered more by associations of negative than of positive enjoyment.

Dr. Brown, in his excellent lecture on Avarice,<sup>8</sup> traces it chiefly to the painful feeling of regret consequent on expense ; in opposition, as he says, to the ordinary theory, which accounts for it from associations of pleasure ; and there can be no doubt that regret is a cause as well as an effect of this passion. Still, it is but one cause, and, I am inclined to think, not the primary ; for if wealth or money had not been previously agreeable, why should we regret its loss ? Without doubt, the ills we undergo from the want of money make us value it much more than if we had always enjoyed it, agreeably to the great principle of privation ; and these ills may give rise to regret ; but the regret is subsequent to the evil as well as to the good. Hardship or privation of some kind, humiliation, or the fear of want, must have existed before we felt the regret, and may exist with but little regret, or none ; for many have experienced poverty without having themselves to blame, or without having known better days. Pleasure, then, was connected with the possession, pain with the want of riches, before any regret at prodigality arose ; and therefore in that pleasure and pain originates the love of wealth. Afterwards, indeed, regret is felt for the loss of that which we valued, and this regret increases our love of riches ; but it first was the effect, before it came in aid, of the propensity.

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<sup>8</sup> Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind. Vol. iii. lect. lxix.

This feeling of regret certainly contributes largely to form the accomplished miser; for when almost every expense is followed by such a pain, we cannot be surprised that it should be avoided as much as possible. And as little expenses are more frequent than great, and therefore more frequently associated with painful regret, we readily see, with Dr. Brown, why avarice is so much seen in small matters: though we ought also to remember, that little gains being more common than great, they are associated with more pleasure than a sum amounting to many, and are therefore spent in detail with more regret than in a lump.

The connection between the feeling of regret and avarice, is most remarkable in those cases where one extreme is followed by another; as when the spendthrift in youth becomes a miser in his old age. In such instances, which may be rare, but are not unexampled, it is the intense regret for loss of fortune consequent on his own folly that drives the prodigal into a course diametrically opposite, and renders him as careful and penurious in future as formerly he was thoughtless and improvident. Fortune, or any other good, will always be regretted when lost, whatever may have been the cause of our misfortune; but the reflection that we alone are to blame, inflicts the deepest wound. It is to avoid the recurrence of this intolerable regret, that the spendthrift becomes a miser.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> In Erskine's *Internal Evidence of Christianity*, there is a story told of a person who, having "wasted his substance in



Love of riches having thus taken root in the mind, its growth is afterwards favoured by three principal causes, increase in the love of power, increase of timidity, and decrease in susceptibility of amusement. We have already remarked that love of power is wont to become stronger as we advance in years ; and therefore love of riches, which depends partly on it, may well grow stronger also. Few have those superior abilities, or superior moral qualities, which fit men for leading senates or ruling over millions, but many may hope for some influence in a larger or smaller sphere ; and they whose characters might not command obedience may obtain it through their purse. Wealth forms the most general of all means by which power is acquired, because it is within the reach of very ordinary talents, and may be inherited by the foolish or the wise.

Secondly, timidity is apt to increase as we descend the vale of years ; partly from experience of danger, which induces caution, partly from consciousness of a decay of bodily or mental power. Hence the old cling to riches as a substitute for other sources of influence ; and as their only ground of security. When mental energy and bodily power decline, nothing but

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riotous living," and been obliged at last to sell his patrimonial estate, walked up to the top of the hill overlooking his family mansion, and after long meditation, formed a resolution that the lands should again be his. From that moment he became a confirmed miser, and never ceased till, by scraping and saving, he actually accumulated enough to purchase back his former property. The anecdote is brought forward by Mr. Erskine to show the possibility of sudden conversions.

our hoarded wealth or the charity of others can save from destitution, so that when no longer able to gain, we are naturally prompted to save. This fear of future want seems to be the grand promoter of avarice; for we have seen that fear always strengthens desire; and therefore timid characters are most liable to that passion; whereas the young, the hopeful, and the enterprising are seldom if ever avaricious. Therefore if you wish your son not to be miserly, beware of encouraging timidity.

Lastly, the grand antagonist to niggardliness is a taste for passing amusements; and this is wont to decline with the progress of years. At first, and perhaps for a long time, there is a struggle between the wish for enjoyment on the one hand, and the love of money on the other: but, by degrees, novelty wears off, amusements cease to please, or we are too indolent to seek them, and we prefer the chimney corner to the play, the opera, or the ball. Then the love of money begins to have the ascendancy, because no longer checked, and it easily induces us to believe that we are too old for these costly gaieties. And when that passion has become confirmed, it destroys all remaining sensibility to amusement, by constantly suggesting the thought how much the pleasure has cost:

medió de fonte leporum  
Surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat.

In this case regret is the wormwood which changes sweet to bitter.

The consequences of desire of wealth are numerous and striking. Since wealth is of a material nature,

and therefore visible and tangible, these consequences press themselves more forcibly upon us than in the case of any other desire, and admit of a more ready appreciation. Some of them, no doubt, can be known only to the metaphysician or moralist, who considers the state of mind ; but others are palpable to the senses, and may be computed with mathematical accuracy. Thus, in order to discover how love of wealth directly affects the character and happiness of each individual, we must penetrate into the mental recesses ; but to know what effect it has had on the outward condition of mankind, we must consult history, travels, and political economy.

Desire of wealth, like other strong desires, has the immense advantage of effectually expelling ennui, as well as the whole train of imaginary ills which besiege the unoccupied mind. Nor is this influence merely negative, for the pleasing object which it shows in prospect, and the activity thence created, give a constant interest to life. In this respect, indeed, the desire in question may be considered superior to almost any other ; first, because it is very general ; secondly, because it is very permanent ; and thirdly, because it may be gratified without any extraordinary skill or ability. To gain a livelihood, or to make a fortune, is the chief object of the great mass of mankind, and forms the business of their whole lives, and without such a pursuit it is difficult to imagine how they could fill up their time. This, too, is a career in which no wonderful talents are necessary, but simply industry, prudence, and common honesty, though, of course, when superior abilities or superior activity are turned into this line, they

will generally have their reward. Thus, as an antidote to all the ills which attend want of occupation, and as a source of interesting activity to the great bulk of mankind from youth to age, desire of wealth forms a most important element of human happiness. Like love and ambition, it assuredly has anxieties which may corrode the heart and furrow the brow, but so has every desire and every interest; and he who should quarrel with mental activity on that account, ought also to object to bodily exercise, because it may end in fatigue.

The activity to which desire of wealth gives rise is not barren of fruits, but leads directly to an object which is necessary to the existence of the individual as well as to the continuance and increase of the human race. And here a prospect opens before us, too wide for the keenest vision, too dazzling for the strongest eye. Look abroad upon the vast and varied scene presented by the globe we inhabit, and first turn your eyes to the icy *Tierra del Fuego*, or to the sunny *Australia*, where want and the climate in the one case, want alone in the other, thin the ranks of a scanty half starved population, living on worms or filth; or see the native American supplying the necessities of his family by the precarious products of the chase, and feeding a few individuals from a widely extended territory. Then change the scene, and behold the civilized world, plains waving with corn, pastures covered with cattle, navigable waters bearing vessels and barges, smiling farms and villages, and cities gleaming from afar; and lastly, see millions of men supplied with wholesome food, and protected from the inclemency of the weather; and you will naturally enquire,

whence this wonderful difference? Among all the concurring causes, one will be found preeminent, desire of wealth, as the means of bettering our condition. This it is which makes a land to flow with milk and honey, causes "the wilderness to be glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose."

Nor is wealth valuable only as the means of living and of common well-being, but it is also essential to the higher improvement of man. Without some accumulated riches, there could be no leisure from the care of providing for daily wants, therefore no study, no moral or intellectual advancement, no adequate notion of a Deity, no true religion. Every invention which facilitates the production of wealth tends to increase the number of those who can addict themselves to the higher pursuits; and therefore the substitution of the plough and harrow for the spade and rake, of the spinning-jenny for the simple spindle or spinning-wheel, and other such inventions, must be considered as of no less importance to the progress of mind than to the comfort and increase of the human race.

We can easily imagine that a desire so strong and so general will sometimes be a source of evil to the individual himself, as well as to those around. Here, as in other cases, the desire may lead to evil, because either too strong in itself, or too little checked by other principles; but in either case the effect will be the same. In ourselves, the effect will be seen in the growth of Avarice, one of the most unamiable if not one of the most destructive passions, for it renders us disagreeable rather than injurious to others. So far as self alone is concerned, avarice is also a foe to happiness, for it tends to rob us of all but one en-

joyment, and that too greatly alloyed with pain. No passion more deadens the heart to all kindly impulses, to the pleasures of general benevolence or private affection, to those of benefaction and liberality; and none so completely deprives us of all the amusements and even the common comforts of life. In the first place, avarice so engrosses the mind with self, that its votary has neither time nor inclination to cultivate the social feelings; and secondly, as society and amusement always lead to expense, they are therefore to be avoided. Hence the miser becomes more and more solitary, more and more averse to pleasure and gaiety, till at last he loses all taste for them; or when he makes an exception, his enjoyment is poisoned by regret at what it cost. Thus, without friends, and almost without acquaintances, he sinks to the grave, solitary, selfish, and joyless, except when thinking on his wealth, which stands him instead of all things. Fear waits upon every passion, and even every desire; but avarice seems subject to it more than any other, and on that account it is more unfavourable to happiness.

His life was nigh unto death's dore yplaste;  
 And thred-bare cote, and cobled shoes hee ware;  
 Ne scarce good morsell all his life did taste;  
 But both from backe and belly still did spare,  
 To fill his bags, and richesse to compare:  
 Yet childe ne kinsman living had he none  
 To leave them to; but thorough daily care  
 To get, and nightly feare to lose his owne,  
 He led a wretched life, unto himselfe unknowne.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Faerie Queene, book i. canto iv. st. xxviii.

Still, with all his selfishness, privations, and anxieties, the miser is probably less wretched than is commonly supposed, less so than those who have no pursuit whatsoever ; and he rather refrains from benefiting than positively injures his neighbour. His love of money may be called sordid, it may almost amount to a disease, and he may deny himself every luxury and even common comforts ; but these being voluntary privations, they are the less felt, and to the last he has an interest which dispels langour and mitigates the fear of death. Nor can we doubt that he has some enjoyment, nay, in an intense degree, for, as a great poet has observed,

“ A miser filling his most hoarded chest  
Feels rapture.”

His wretchedness, moreover, being of a palpable kind, and consisting much in the want of comforts, it makes the greater impression upon the observer, and may be magnified beyond the reality. The miser is more a foe to himself than to any one else, for though he does not directly minister to the pleasure of others, and therefore is thought very disagreeable, and is loaded with reproach, yet all the while his money lies not idle. Except in countries where property is insecure, no one now thinks of locking up his treasure in a box ; for a talent hid in a napkin can bring in no interest. If, then, the miser do not himself employ his funds, he lends them to those who will, and thus labour is maintained, and the wealth of the country increased ; whereas the spendthrift may be loved by his bottle companions, but in wasting his own re-

sources he impoverishes his family as well as the nation at large. The former hurts himself more than any one else, and is even useful, though unintentionally; the latter injures both himself and others. But as the agreeable qualities of the spendthrift are more evident than the useful propensities of the miser, and as, moreover, it is the agreeable rather than the useful which conciliates love, therefore the prodigal is treated with greater lenity.

Avarice in the extreme is of rare occurrence, but in a modified degree it is often met with. In whatever degree it may be found, the phenomena and consequences will in kind be similar to the above, though they be much less strong and glaring, and the propensity, in consequence, assume a milder name; such as stinginess, narrowness, parsimony, frugality, economy, a series of terms passing gradually from blame to praise. It cannot be denied that love of wealth, as it gains upon us more and more, tends to subdue some of the finer principles of our nature, generosity, liberality, general charity, and even private love; that it hardens the heart and shuts the hand, and thus deprives us of the social pleasures, and prevents us from relieving the wants of others. It seems to act partly on the principle of occupation, partly from incompatibility; for it may so engage the mind as to leave little room for other and loftier sentiments, and these often leading to expense, they are contrary to the ruling passion.

Thirst for riches is a more selfish passion than either love or ambition; for love, as we know, has in it much that is social, and even ambition can-



not be gratified without the aid of others, whose interests or affections must be looked to. But love of money regards self alone, and is adverse to all communication, except in the way of business, for we can seldom do good to our fellow-creatures, or even associate with them, without being led into expense. In the breasts of rulers, the passion in question has never produced such gigantic evils as ambition, yet in this respect it is more formidable, that the one is often arrested by difficulty or impossibility, while the other can neither be satiated nor easily stopped. To his own subjects a rapacious tyrant may be a greater scourge than an ambitious one ; for while the latter is restrained by his neighbours, the former may pillage with impunity. Henry VII. and Vespasian had certainly good qualities, and no remarkable vices, but they were dreaded and disliked for their avarice ; while Louis XIV. though prodigal of blood and treasure, was lauded as the mighty monarch. Here, however, as in other cases, the avaricious tendency was disliked and disapproved even more than its effects could justify, while the evils of prodigality were covered by splendour and glory. In truth, a prodigal monarch must also be a rapacious one ; but those who live on his prodigality stifle the complaints of the sufferers : whereas a rapacious monarch may not be prodigal, but may usefully employ what he has unjustly amassed. George IV. of England was a prodigal king, and his prodigality was supplied by large sums drawn from the people, but it has left only a flimsy pavilion ; while Vespasian, who was called avaricious, built the Colosseum.

The consequences of desire of wealth will, of course, vary considerably, according to the form which the passion may assume, whether it be Covetousness or Avarice; the one shown by activity in getting, the other by carefulness in spending. It is the latter, in particular, which tends to deaden the heart, to close the hand, to produce intense selfishness, and to strip us of all common enjoyments; but it contains a principle essential to private as well as public welfare, and is not much given positively to injure others: whereas covetousness is not inconsistent with liberality, nor even with imprudence and prodigality, and prevents us not from enjoying society or other amusements; but it is a fertile source of wrong and violence.

Thus I am led to remark, in conclusion, that desire of wealth, when excessive, or unrestrained by other principles, may and often does lead to attacks upon our neighbour's goods. The tendency of civilization is in some degree to tame the passions of hate, such as anger and revenge, but to increase the desire for riches; so that in savage life crimes against the person predominate, in civilized, those against property. This will not appear surprising, when we consider, first, that in the latter state of society wealth can command so many more enjoyments; secondly, that it becomes itself a great distinction, and may lead to most others, while the want of it is almost a disgrace; and, lastly, that it is more constantly exposed to view, so as to tempt the beholder. The needy man, who walks through a rich and populous city, is liable to be perpetually mortified by the inferiority of

his condition to numbers whom he sees around him, and his desires are for ever stimulated by the presence of objects which he is forbidden to touch. In such circumstances all will not refrain, but some will attempt to get that by force or fraud which they cannot or will not by labour. To curb the desire of wealth is then the chief object of criminal law ; and to preserve property secure from the attacks of the needy or the rapacious, of the low or the high, of fellow-subjects or of rulers, becomes the principal end of political government.

While, then, by a wise system of criminal and constitutional law these evils may greatly be prevented, the other inconveniences may be lessened by education and early moral training : but be the evils what they may, they cannot be compared with the advantages that flow from a desire which more than any other has led us on to the civilized state ; has made corn stand thick on our plains and valleys, and covered even our mountains with flocks and herds, has raised up cities and villages in woods and wilds, and has enabled man to fulfil his destiny, to multiply and replenish the earth.

SECTION V.—*Desire of Reputation ; of Fame  
or Glory.*

THE desire next to be considered is one of great importance in a moral and political point of view, and it admits of considerable variety in its nature and in its consequences. This is desire of reputation, leading

on to love of fame or glory ; in its humbler form one of the most useful, in its higher, one of the most intoxicating and dangerous of the passions.

According to the method formerly adopted, we shall proceed in the first place to examine the question, Why is reputation agreeable? or in other words, what are the elements of the pleasure of reputation ; and hence of the desire connected with that pleasure ?

Though there is a considerable difference between Affection and Esteem, there is still a certain analogy ; while Admiration seems to occupy the interval, and is somewhat allied to both. In affection, there is more of emotion than of judgment ; in esteem, more of judgment than emotion ; while in admiration the two are nearly balanced, the scale, however, sometimes inclining to the one side, sometimes to the other ; though in general it tends more to warmth than to cool intellectual decision. Admiration may warm into affection, or cool down into esteem ; but the former change is the more common, proving that the primary state of mind was thus more allied to love than to reason. Admiration may arise from bodily as well as from mental qualities, and is often the commencement of a real passion ; but when it terminates in esteem, the effect is produced by the decline of the emotion which formerly warmed the judgment. The one having subsided, the other remains nearly alone, and constitutes esteem, which always depends upon mental excellence, and sometimes leads on to affection, rarely to sexual love ; for esteem itself is not without some emotion.

As we are formed to take pleasure in being be-

loved, so are we framed to delight in admiration and esteem, and we can no more account for the phenomenon, than explain why sugar is more palatable than wormwood. It must be considered as an ultimate fact in human nature, one which cannot be traced any further; and therefore the corresponding desire is primary or original, like desire of affection or of power, and unlike desire of wealth which we have seen to be derivative. In the first place then, reputation is agreeable in itself, and is wished for accordingly.

Secondly, such is the constitution of man that when he acts in one way, there arises within him a sentiment of approbation, when in another and contrary way, a sentiment of disapprobation. The former is inseparably connected with pleasure, the latter with pain; and as one or the other is constantly recurring, upon them depends much of our happiness or misery. To analyze these sentiments, to show the occasions on which they appear, and thus to arrive at the fundamental circumstance or circumstances which give rise to them, belongs to the science of duty or Ethics, and will be gone through in the proper place. Suffice it for the present to observe that our self-approval or disapproval depends not a little upon the sentiments of those around us; that in doubtful cases our opinions, and hence our feelings, are greatly swayed by the known opinions and feelings of others, and that it is next to impossible for a man to persevere in a course which he knows to be universally obnoxious without being driven from self-complacency to self-condemnation. Therefore the approbation of our fellows is

eagerly sought after, not only because it is agreeable in itself, but also because it fortifies a good opinion of ourselves. It makes us feel at ease, and relieves that intolerable burthen which hangs upon the spirits, and sinks us to the earth, when conscious of acting amiss.

So much indeed does the pleasure of reputation depend upon the above circumstance, that praise which we know to be undeserved scarcely gratifies at all, and may even have a contrary effect, by reminding us of our real want of merit. Such a reflection might never have occurred had it not been forced upon us by the applause conferred upon a different conduct, or different springs of action. By this disagreeable suggestion, all the delights of praise may be balanced or outweighed, so that the result shall be decidedly unpleasant. This might be thought a proof that the applause of others has no direct charm, but acts only through self-approbation; but it is not so, for applause, though in itself agreeable, may not be sufficient to compensate the humbling feeling suggested by unmerited praise. Roses are sweet, but the thorns they bear make us choose another bed. Warmth is delightful, but the noxious insects it engenders often cause us to sigh for cold.

How much, however, our love of praise depends upon its effect in favouring self-complacency, is shown by the well known fact, that we are always most gratified with applause when it is least expected. When sure of approbation we value it but slightly; when previously uncertain, we hug it with delight. This seems to show that praise gratifies the mind by sup-

porting the tottering fabric which self-love had begun to raise. If the building can stand alone, we are not anxious for a prop, otherwise we are glad to have such an auxiliary. Thus persons are fond of bringing forward some new accomplishment, rather than an old undisputed one, casting about on all sides for admiration and encouragement. Hence the connection between diffidence and vanity ; for by making a display we hope to meet applause and thus to banish all sense of inferiority.

Those, on the other hand, who are full of confidence do not appear vain, for being already satisfied with themselves they seek no encouragement from others.

These facts and reasonings certainly show that the approbation of others is very much sought, because it fortifies our own, but they are insufficient to prove that it is not also directly agreeable. Sweet as melodious music fall the notes of praise on the ear, and to reach the heart we have only to sound them well ; for who among the sons of men can withstand ingenious flattery ? Those who can flatter with skill possess a power over others, which may become unlimited, for he who praises will be always liked, if he be but thought sincere, and he who can thus deceive another may do with him what he will. Here, as in similar cases, we must consult our own minds, and they, I think, will inform us, that we value praise not only because it makes us well pleased with ourselves, or in other words, gratifies our self-love ; but also because the admiration and esteem which it indicates, are in themselves delightful ; exactly as we value tokens which seem to denote affection. The last is un-

doubtedly valued for itself, and so are the two former ; and thus by a triple motive we are urged to stand well with our fellows ; for we may hope to be admired or esteemed by many from whom we can expect no love.

In addition to the reason above given, it ought also to be borne in mind, that unexpected praise is sweetest, because it excites surprise, itself a most agreeable emotion, and one which never can be roused by long paid and customary applause.

Thirdly, reputation is agreeable by reason of its consequences. In all situations of life, reputation is useful, and in some it is absolutely indispensable. Now this is of two kinds, reputation for ability, and for moral worth, and sometimes the former is more required, sometimes the latter, according to the nature of the employment ; but one or other is sure to be advantageous. From the common servant up to the minister of state, none can do without a character, for honesty, for talents, or both ; and what is a passport to fortune must itself be highly prized.

Fourthly, reputation is valued as a distinction which lifts us above the crowd, and flatters our love of superiority. And here we may perceive the commencement of the love of fame or glory ; and may mark how what was only a desire, begins to swell into a passion. It is impossible to fix the exact limit between the two, for there is no exact limit, and it will therefore be determined differently by different persons ; but when we first long for renown, the seeds of the passion are sown. Formerly we desired *esteem*, because we are so constituted as to take plea-



sure in the esteem of others, or because it sets us inwardly at ease, or lastly, because it serves to promote our material interest ; now we wish for *admiration* to raise us above our fellows. Corresponding to this difference in the feeling which we wish to excite in others, is the difference of qualities on which we chiefly rely ; for esteem mainly depends upon moral excellence, but admiration upon intellectual as well as moral pre-eminence. Therefore while we can look for esteem only in one way, we can expect admiration in several ; and so may reach the temple of fame by one road, rather than another ; and should we choose the intellectual path, may almost forget the moral. For superior talent does command the admiration of men independently of moral worth, in spite of all we may preach to the contrary. Whatever may have been the crimes of Alexander, Cæsar, or Napoleon, whatever misery they have caused, their names are great and illustrious ; and though the glory of Bacon be shaded, it is not obliterated, by meanness and corruption. Call this a prejudice if you will, a noxious prejudice, still the fact is such ; and so long as men can command admiration apart from the practice of virtue, it will often thus be sought. Hence desire of reputation first begins to be dangerous when it passes into love of fame ; and the danger depends upon this, that admiration more than esteem is then the principal object, and that the former may be attained with or without virtue. Nay glory is sought and gained by means subversive of all morality, by unjust warfare, and by licentious prose or poetry ; for though the vice should be condemned, the ability will command applause.

We may remark further that men are much more tolerant of animadversions upon their moral character than on their intellect ; and that there is scarcely any one who would not rather be called a bad man than a fool. The fact I think certain, and the reason seems to be, that folly is probably as destructive as vice, and at the same time generally incurable ; whereas vice may and often is got rid of by a slow or rapid conversion. Since in the one case there is hope of amendment, in the other none, the former is naturally preferred. On the same principle, superior intellect is admired, even when abused ; not merely on account of its general tendency, which is highly beneficial, and on account of its rarity, but also from the consideration that it may be better employed in future.

So far there is nothing peculiarly mysterious in desire of reputation or of fame ; but other and less evident principles lend their aid to heighten the passion for glory. It subdues the whole man by flattering two universal principles of human nature, the wish to extend, and the wish to perpetuate our being. But how does fame gratify these propensities ? This we shall endeavour to show ; but first, we may remark that in no case does the influence of imagination appear more like enchantment. It operates upon us in a way that we cannot resist, and all the powers of reasoning vanish at its touch. Moralists and satirists attempt to dissipate the charm, but all to no purpose ; for they who endeavour to break it, are themselves bound by the spell. What is fame ? say they, a phantom, a breath, a smoke that speedily vanishes in

thin air. "What is honour?" says Falstaff. "A word. What is in that word, honour? What is that honour? Air. A trim reckoning!—Who hath it? He that died o' Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No. Doth he hear it? No. Is it insensible then? Yea, to the dead. But will it not live with the living? No. Why? Detraction will not suffer it:—therefore I'll none of it: Honour is a mere scutcheon, and so ends my catechism."<sup>1</sup>

In these short sentences, we have a lively summary of the arguments against the love of fame which have filled ponderous volumes, and if they all prove vain, it is not that they are void of reason, but because they are met by an invincible argument on the other side, the pleasure which men cannot help feeling in being known and admired by others. So long as this pleasure exists, men will pursue it, and though, perhaps, founded on a delusion, or trick of the fancy, yet that matters little, provided the delusion be universal and incurable. That it is so, all past experience shows; and therefore we must reckon upon this as an essential part of our nature. Were we to give in to the line of reasoning pursued by many moralists who call themselves philosophers, nothing ought to be desired by man, but what serves to drive away cold and hunger; for with them, whatever is not palpable is vanity. If it be asked, what is the use of glory? I would also ask, what is the use of affection? The one as well as the other may, no doubt, lead to our physical well-being; but whether they do or not they

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<sup>1</sup> Henry IV. part i. act v. scene 1.

would still be highly prized, because our nature is such as to delight in both for their own sakes. But could it be shown that glory is worthless, the same arguments would prove that affection is altogether vanity.

Fame, like affection, is greatly valued on this account, that it seems to enlarge our being; for according to common language, which must correspond to common ideas, we are said to live in the hearts, or in the breath, of all who love and admire us. The knowledge that many, in various and distant parts, feel for us, think and talk about us, gives rise to an idea of our ubiquity. The delusion seems to be brought about in this way. We gradually acquire the notion that our fame is a part of ourselves, and as that fame becomes more and more extended, self, to which it belongs, seems to expand along with it. That fame is considered as a possession is evident from ordinary language, for we talk of our reputation, our fame, as we do of our power, or our wealth, and if it be thought a possession, it must be of a more intimate nature than riches, which are material and outward, and may change hands from day to day. It is, therefore, something nearer to us, a portion as it were of our personal identity; and it is also that portion by which we are capable of indefinite expansion, for power and affection have their limits, but fame has evidently none. In a word, fame, being constantly associated with self, comes at last to be confounded with it, and then by a natural inference, an extension of the one is thought to be an extension of the other. Exactly in the same way fame gratifies our love of immortality; for our

fame being so closely associated with self, as at last to become identified with it, we can hardly escape the deduction that what prolongs the one must serve to perpetuate the other, and though ever and anon the illusion be expelled, yet it constantly recurs, and is eagerly caught at by the mind that longeth after immortality. One poet says :

Non omnis moriar, multaque pars mei  
Vitabit Libitinam.<sup>2</sup>

and another,

Cùm volet illa dies, quæ nil, nisi corporis hujus  
Jus habet, incerti spatium mihi finiat ævi :  
Parte tamen meliore mei super alta perennis  
Astra ferar, nomenque erit indelebile nostrum.  
————— perque omnia secula famæ,  
Si quid habent veri Vatum præsentia, vivam.<sup>3</sup>

Here we see that fame is completely identified with self, that it is considered as a part, and the better part of it ; and hence if the former be immortal, so must the latter. The premises being granted, the conclusion is immediate and irresistible.

The illusion is moreover favoured by this circumstance, that although for a moment we can consider our identity as divided ; self, upon reflection, seems always one and indivisible ; and therefore fame must either be all or none. To put fame for the whole of self, would be too bold a step at once, for nature goes but slowly, and it is only at college that a degree can be reached *per saltum*. When Cæsar was but a private

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<sup>2</sup> Hor.

<sup>3</sup> Ovid Metamorph. Conclusion.

citizen, he little thought of being one day Emperor of Rome. So the mind does not begin by putting fame for the whole of self, but first it breaks down our identity, and assigns to fame a part; and then as it can neither maintain the idea of division nor entirely separate fame from self, it is obliged to yield all. Here, as before, the error is entirely at first, for if the primary step be sound, the secondary follows of course.<sup>4</sup>

It is evident that there can be but one real immortality consisting in our continuance as a thinking and sentient being, such as we are at present, a being susceptible of change, and may be, great and progressive improvement, but in every state endowed with thought and feeling. Though such a futurity must always be considered the noblest subject for human contemplation, yet it does not prevent us from desiring another and less real sort of immortality. There are three ways in which men seek to perpetuate themselves, all more or less fanciful; for none of them really prolong the existence of the individual. Still, since the illusion is pleasing as well as salutary, and

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<sup>4</sup> On this subject the reader will do well to consult Brown's *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, vol. iii. lect. lxxi. That author treats of the fancied expansion and perpetuity of our being, which enter into the passion for glory, and attempts to account for the illusion, but it is not easy to follow him through a maze of words. My view of the case is shortly this; first, fame is considered as closely allied to self, then from constant association, it is put for a part of self; further, since upon reflection, self is indivisible, fame is the whole of self, and therefore the expansion and perpetuity of the former is the same as the expansion and perpetuity of the latter.

since it cannot be quite dispelled, it deserves to be respected by the philosopher, rather than ridiculed by the satirist. Men seek to perpetuate themselves corporeally in their offspring, spiritually in their works of purely mental or mixed labour; and lastly, by glory in the minds of others. This glory is no doubt founded on their works, but it may long survive them: for, of the conquests of Alexander, Zenghis, or Tamerlane, what is now left? and of the writers of antiquity, how many are known to us only by name! The perpetuity by children, as Bacon has observed, is common to man with brutes, while that by works and by fame belongs to the former alone. And of all our labours, those which are purely mental are likely to last the longest, especially since the invention of printing, which, by flattering a darling propensity, stimulates the energies of man. The meditations of Bacon and Newton are perpetuated in their writings, in the discoveries of science, in the increasing power of man, and in the improvement of our social condition, and their talents will be admired and their memories blest to the latest posterity. The works of Homer have survived the wreck of many empires, and will probably outlive many more; and they will be read with delight when the temples of Athens are fallen, and the marvellous statues of Phidias are broken or crumbled into dust. They may even witness the time when the stately pyramids shall decay, and the magnificent tomb of Cheops be levelled with the surrounding sands.

Having thus traced the various elements comprised in the pleasure of fame, and in the desire connected with it, little remains to be said on the origin of this

passion. We have seen that love of fame springs from love of reputation, an original propensity of our nature, and comes gradually to vary from the latter, by seeking admiration rather than esteem ; and that it derives force from three elementary principles, love of distinction, of expansion, of immortality. Suffice it to add that the passion may be observed very early in life. The child who is brought forward by a doting mother to recite some nursery rhymes before company, feels his little bosom palpitate with a thirst for applause ; and when grown into the school-boy, he is chosen along with a few to speak in public, his youthful soul is rapt in visions of glory. Through all his after-life, never can he forget the day when first he stood aloft to be gazed on and admired, while trembling with emotion, he uttered some eloquent strain. Thus is a passion nursed, which in future years may rule the whole man, and urge him to noble actions, but possibly to deeds of crime.

In its moral and political consequences, desire of reputation is one of the utmost importance. Next to our own conscience, the approbation or disapprobation of others is the best and most powerful sanction to virtue, public as well as private. The force of this sanction entirely depends upon the susceptibility of man to good or bad repute, for if he cared for neither, they could not influence his actions. One who should utterly disregard the sentiments of others, would be either above or below humanity ; for such disregard could proceed only from conscious superiority, or from indifference to crime. A man whose conscience was seared might be proof against the disapprobation of his fellows, and this indifference to



blame would still further deaden his conscience. For, though conscience or self-approbation ought never to be sacrificed to the opinion of others, yet in general, this opinion has a wonderful effect in modifying our views of right and wrong, and hence the sentiment which follows. We have seen above that one reason why praise is agreeable, is that it fortifies a good opinion of ourselves, and where there is a doubt, sets us quite at ease. In such cases, it is evident that our own approbation is fixed by that of others ; and though a man may fly in the face of the world, and yet his conscience acquit him, still such instances are rare ; and in general, either he is converted to the popular sentiment, or it to his. This popular sentiment may err, and indeed cannot always be right, for in a few cases it enjoins opposites, according to the age or country ; but on the whole it is a safe guide : and if man were indifferent to it, he would be freed not only from one of the most general and powerful sanctions, but also one less liable to error than almost any other. Religion, so far as it goes, is no doubt to be preferred, but religion, giving only general rules, the application is often doubtful ; and as for conscience, this, as we have remarked, commonly coincides with opinion. Where conscience is weak, opinion steps in to strengthen it, and if the latter may err, so may the former ; for both analogy and direct experience prove it not to be infallible. Opinion, be it observed, shows us the public conscience, for what people blame in another, they would also blame in themselves ; and surely there is no reason why the conscience of many should be more fallible than that of one. Nay, the opinion of

others ought to be more valuable, because it is more impartial, especially if distant countries or posterity be consulted ; whereas the conscience of the individual may not only be hardened by custom, but judgment, which guides the feeling, may be blinded by interest or passion.

The desire we are now considering is as important in politics as in ethics. The vast and growing power of the press, that palladium of free institutions, is founded, in great part, on this principle of our nature, the susceptibility of man to good or bad repute. Take away this susceptibility, and what avails praise or reproach ? They would be like harmonious or discordant notes to those who have no ear for music, or like the beauties or deformities of nature to those who have no sight. Extirpate this desire, and nothing but fear remains to restrain the ruling powers ; but what evils may governors inflict before they dread a revolution ! This is the last resource of a suffering nation, and ought to be the last ; for the remedy is sharp and dangerous : but were men indifferent to character, such a change, or the fear of it, would be our only safeguard. The grand advantage of the press is this, that it brings in desire of reputation as a motive to public conduct ; while by giving due warning it keeps alive a salutary fear ; and so facilitates gradual and prevents violent changes. The power of public opinion rests generally upon that desire, and occasionally upon this fear ; and public opinion rules, or will one day rule, the world.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See more on this subject in " Political Discourses," Disc. i. p. 16.

When desire of reputation passes into love of fame or glory, its consequences are of a more mixed nature. In common with other passions, it expels all languor of mind, all fanciful evils, rouses the energies of the soul, and leads especially to noble deeds. Generally speaking, these deeds are useful to mankind as well as glorious to the individual; and if not always, it is owing to the circumstance above mentioned, that admiration may be obtained by high and rare talents, apart from moral worth. Hence a passion which was meant to urge us to all that is truly great and excellent, has sometimes proved a scourge as fatal as ambition itself, with which it is frequently united; and, along with the latter, has helped to desolate the earth. When love of glory becomes separated from desire of virtuous reputation, it may lead to any extravagance, and terminate in mere love of notoriety, notoriety for good or ill; a passion which caused the burning of the temple of Ephesus. In such instances the passion becomes no better than madness, and deserves only hard diet and a strait waistcoat. And well would it have been for the world if many of those conquerors who have waded through blood to glory had been put under close confinement, and fed upon meagre fare, till their ardour had somewhat cooled; for a passion, which the tears of humanity could not soften, might have yielded to restraint and hunger. Sometimes this passion for glory, apart from virtue, may seize upon a whole nation, and render it as formidable to its neighbours as a volcano to the villages beneath, liable to be buried under a flood of lava or showers of cinders. We may deplore

the fate of those ancient cities overwhelmed by an eruption of Vesuvius, but we must curse the memory of the monarch who could waste with fire the Palatine.

But we should not allow ourselves to fall down before a mighty idol, and be blinded to the general utility of the passion by a few glaring instances to the contrary. At every turn we must guard against that powerful spell, which leads the judgment captive by drawing all our attention to a few illuminated spots. Love of glory, like love of power, sometimes leads to gigantic mischief; but the general operation is salutary, though this be less observed; for if admiration may be sought and gained by means which morality disclaims, it is much more commonly won in ways that virtue approves. It is only extraordinary ability that so captivates men as to make them forget whether it be well employed; and less brilliant talents that wish for admiration must, at the same time, seek for esteem. Don Juan may be read and admired, but Faublas excites disgust; and though the greatness of Cæsar or Napoleon may often blind us to their crimes, how many less gifted adventurers are remembered with hatred or scorn! Finally, love of fame, when combined with a regard to virtue, leads to the highest excellence in every department, in science, letters, and the arts, and is one of the constant causes of the improvement of the human race.

SECTION VI.—*Desire of Knowledge, or Curiosity.*

IN the whole range of the passions none seems to have been treated in general with greater favour than Desire of Knowledge, or Curiosity; though even this has not entirely escaped the attacks of those who appear determined to run down every propensity of human nature. Few have dared openly to avow themselves the apostles of ignorance, but by depreciating one branch of knowledge after another, many have singularly narrowed the sphere of intellectual exertion, while some religious zealots have not scrupled to decry all profane learning, as opposed to devotion in general, and especially to humility.<sup>1</sup> Scarcely any precept of the inspired writers has been more dwelt upon than that whereby we are told not to allow ourselves to be spoilt by philosophy, and to avoid oppositions of science falsely so called; and not unfrequently the word false has been dropped, and philosophy, in whatever form, been assailed with indiscriminate obloquy. That desire of knowledge has its dangers we shall presently see, but what propensity of our nature is free from them? and he who should seriously object to curiosity on that account, ought, likewise, to discourage benevolence as well as religion, because the one is often misplaced, while

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<sup>1</sup> See, in particular, the famous work of Thomas à Kempis *De Imitatione Christi*. The forty-third chapter of the third book is thus entitled, *Contra vanam et secularem scientiam*.

the other gave birth to the crusades, and nerved the arm of Ravaillac.

What are the elements of the pleasure of knowledge, and hence of the desire connected with that pleasure? It is certain that as we are formed by nature to delight in knowledge for its own sake, independently of its results or practical application, as well as to be grieved at conscious ignorance, so are we prompted incessantly to seek the one and shun the other. This desire is properly called curiosity, and it is a simple feeling, not susceptible of decomposition or analysis.

True it is that knowledge leads to innumerable improvements in social life; that it is the grand source of power over nature, animate and inanimate, and is our guide in the present, our ground of hope in the future condition of mortality. On account of this utility, public as well as private, knowledge is highly prized; as also on account of the distinction which attends those who have made more than usual proficiency. In short, knowledge may be desired as the means of palpably benefiting ourselves or others, or as a token of superiority. But genuine curiosity pursues not knowledge as the means by which other propensities may be gratified. Here knowledge itself is the end in view, and though considerations of private interest, or public utility, may afterwards occur, and increase our ardour in study, yet these encourage or accompany, rather than constitute, curiosity. Desire of wealth, of fame, of influence, or perhaps general benevolence, may combine with curiosity to rouse our intellectual energies, or may direct and cherish it,

but they are altogether different, and look to different objects, though they happen to meet by the way ; as two or more travellers may chance to be thrown together and may lend mutual assistance, though one journey for business, another for the mere pleasure of the trip. It is seldom that men follow any great object from one motive alone, for when the ruling desire has pointed out the course, secondary advantages present themselves, giving rise to new motives, which may even outlive the original. Thus many a one who in youth was prompted to acquire learning chiefly by curiosity, may in after life pursue it as leading to fortune.

And this brings me to remark, that curiosity is not only very different in degree in different persons, but is generally strongest in youth, and, unlike ambition or avarice, is apt to decline with age. As men differ from each other in the intensity of their desires for power, fame, or wealth, so likewise in their desire for knowledge ; and the same individual may scarcely less differ from himself at distant periods of life. In some, curiosity may certainly amount to a strong and durable passion, and suffice to determine a career ; but in general it is less to be relied on than the desires above enumerated. It seldom altogether deserts us, but it is apt soon to tire of one thing, and requires to be fed by novelty. At times it is so intense as to drive us into danger with a force not to be resisted, as when it urged Franklin to draw down lightning from the clouds. How many chemists have exposed their lives in making new and hazardous experiments ! and how many run into scenes of tumult purely from curiosity ! Young medical students have

been known seriously to injure their health from trying the effect of poisons on their own frame. Such is the strength of this passion, that it often leads us into scenes which otherwise would be utterly revolting, and so far overcomes the natural delicacy of women as to impel them to public executions, and to gaze on the carcases of the Morgue. Objects naturally most disgusting to the senses lose all their ugliness in the eyes of the medical student, who looks upon them as curious and instructive phenomena in natural history. Nay, the best feelings of our nature, the ordinary sentiments of humanity, can be completely stifled by the predominance of this passion, as when animals are submitted to the most intense and lengthened tortures, for the sake of discoveries in physiology, without an involuntary shudder, or any one symptom of compunction. It seems doubtful whether love itself can afford us a more striking instance of desire so engrossing as to exclude every other feeling.

But, in general, curiosity is a far less steady and durable passion than ambition, covetousness, or love of glory. A few who have become renowned for their scientific discoveries have, no doubt, felt its influence during their whole lives, and in an uniform direction; but with the mass it is a wayward propensity, sometimes attaching itself to this, sometimes to that, from the most lofty objects to the most low; here diving into secrets of state, there into secrets of families; at one time tracing the mysteries of politics, at another prying into personal history, and gossiping from door to door. It may, indeed, be said, that the same observation applies to ambition and love of



glory, that a few only are actuated by them steadily and in one direction, while the many are led by them in a more capricious manner, sometimes seeking power or fame in this line, sometimes in that ; but still those passions seem to have a greater tendency to fix a man, and much more frequently do so, than curiosity. Besides, the last generally decreases with age, while the former, on the contrary, increase, and on that account they are more likely to give permanent occupation to the mind.

Why, it may be asked, does curiosity decrease with age? The reason seems to be, that it requires the spur of novelty, and of this, as we advance in years, there is always less and less. All objects become more and more familiar, and though, in fact, we may know very little about them, yet such is the effect of custom, that we fancy we know them well. Show a person for the first time the effect of the magnet and he will be excessively surprised, and will probably feel an eager curiosity to investigate the cause of the phenomenon : but this first impulse being checked, let him daily witness the same occurrence, and he will cease to think it so strange. If a native of Timbuctoo were transported all at once to Europe, and without previous information were to see ice, he might more readily be induced to study the properties of caloric than an Englishman or Frenchman, who has so often seen water frozen that he thinks the event unworthy of peculiar attention. Before Newton, every body had seen heavy bodies fall to the ground, but no one thought of inquiring why they did not go upward ; and if a common per-

son had put such a question he would probably have been thought a fool; for what men have always witnessed, they think could not possibly have been otherwise, and needs no explanation.

When we first come into the world every thing is so new, that we cannot but be sensible of our ignorance, and desire to be informed, as we see in children who have constantly in their mouths that puzzling monosyllable, *why?* But as years creep on and custom gains the ascendancy, though in truth we may know very little, we forget that we have aught to learn. Thus, novelty is the nurse of curiosity, custom the deadly foe, and therefore it is the passion of youth rather than of age. Novelty makes us see our ignorance, custom blinds us thereto, and hence the former stimulates, the latter extinguishes, desire. When we consider that we enter upon life ignorant of every thing, and do what we may, that we must leave it ignorant of most things, it cannot but appear surprising that curiosity should ever decline; for as this desire can never want an object in futurity, it ought to be insatiable. One truth attained opens up the view of another, and so on for ever. But this, like every other desire, requires to be fed, otherwise it languishes and dies; it demands more mental exertion than almost any other; and the object, knowledge, beyond a certain point, leads not surely or directly to the increase of our personal comforts, or to the support of our families. The immense majority of mankind are excluded by dire necessity from addicting themselves to intellectual pursuits as the main business of life, and therefore their curiosity dies for

want of nourishment; while of those who possess leisure, few have sufficient energy to conquer the first difficulties which beset the path of science. They who might have leisure, and who really have both ardour and intellect to fit them for any undertaking, generally prefer the career of wealth or ambition, because the reward, being there of a palpable nature, more readily makes an impression; whereas the reward of knowledge, being inward, may be imagined, but cannot be seen. Though the delights of investigation, leading to invention and discovery, be among the greatest we possess, they are felt in secret, and are known only to the individual; while the advantages of wealth and power display themselves in outward show, and captivate the senses before they inflame the desires. The stately palace, the beautiful garden and grounds well stocked with fruit and game, the long retinue of servants, and costly equipages, strike directly upon the eye and rouse the passion of covetousness; but no one witnesses the lonely student, though wrapt in an elysium of joy. Among the sources of fallacy common to the whole human race, or the *idola tribus* of Bacon, the undue importance given to what is outward over what is inward, to the visible and tangible over the purely mental, ought never to be forgotten.

Curiosity is a desire which shows itself in our earliest years; it impels the infant to stretch out his little arms to seize and examine the objects before his eye, and as he grows in strength and faculties, curiosity increases along with them. Nothing is more remarkable than the inquisitiveness of children, and

nothing is more puzzling or embarrassing, for they frequently put questions which their elders either will not or cannot answer. As by their sincerity they often wound our vanity, so by their wish for knowledge they make us aware of our ignorance. Moreover, the greater the curiosity the brighter is the promise of the child, for it is valuable both as a cause and a symptom ; a cause because it stimulates to the acquisition of knowledge, a symptom, because it is generally found in degree proportional to the intellectual faculties. A child without curiosity might be fairly put down as a dunce.

I before remarked that a question had been started, whether all desire arise from the prospect of pleasure or of relief from pain, or whether it do not in the first instance precede all such consideration ; and at the same time I observed, that this being a purely metaphysical question, of no manifest influence on practice, it was not necessarily included within the range of the present inquiry. Consequently, I shall not here pretend to determine whether curiosity do or do not originally spring from the view of pleasure or pain ; but shall content myself with one observation of great practical importance, and which seems to be indisputable. Though it were granted that desire first springs up spontaneously, yet it must be allowed that pleasure, and especially pain, greatly influence it afterwards ; and in the present case, the pain of ignorance is a prodigious incentive to curiosity. Whoever has looked within him will agree, that his zeal for knowledge was never so ardent as when he had been made to feel his deficiency. To get rid

of this humiliation, we eagerly set to work to procure all the information in our power, and cannot rest till our object has been attained. Hence the advantage of conducting young persons to visit such persons and places as may make them sensible how little they know. When a boy I was taken to see the Tower, and on entering the room where several kings of England are represented on horseback and in armour, I was so grieved at knowing nothing of their achievements, that I instantly procured a history, and devoured it with avidity.

He who will be the first in company must bid adieu to all improvement; and they who are brought up entirely at home are somewhat in the same position, for they see none of their own age superior to themselves; while he who frequents the society of the truly learned, and they who go to public schools or colleges, are soon awakened to a sense of their inferiority. There is, probably, no stronger argument in favour of public education than this, that it makes a boy aware of his ignorance, and then if he feel it not, his case is hopeless.

When we consider curiosity in its effects upon human happiness, we must proclaim it a truly delightful passion. While in common with the other passions it occupies and animates the mind, dispels ennui, melancholy, and all imaginary ills, it is peculiarly full of variety, and exempt from the evils to which the rest are liable. The objects of the other passions may not only be never attained, but when attained, they may be readily lost, or may please us less than we expected; while knowledge, to a certain extent,

can hardly be missed by him who pursues it in earnest, and when possessed it can also be kept, and is sure to reward its votaries. Hence curiosity is little exposed to that anxiety and disappointment which are the principal drawbacks to the other ruling desires, and on that account it must be more favourable to happiness. Not that it is free from all uneasiness, for the pain of unsatisfied curiosity is considerable, and in striving to solve difficulties the mind is put upon the rack, and can find repose neither by day nor night. In some rare instances this has even gone so far as quite to overthrow the reason. But in general these pains are no more than sufficient to keep desire alive and lead to advancement in knowledge, and they certainly cannot be compared with those which wait upon the other passions. When they become too irksome, they admit moreover of a ready alleviation, for society, travel, or any other amusement, may serve to dissipate the thoughts, and give fresh vigour to a mind fatigued with long exertion. This is one reason why literary men prefer to reside in cities, where a multiplicity of objects, and a constant movement, tend without an effort to change the current of their ideas.

Closely connected with the above is another grand advantage of curiosity, that it can be gratified independently of others, whereas love, ambition, covetousness, and desire of fame, require the concurrence of our fellow-men. Though this circumstance may prevent curiosity from becoming the passion of many, it renders it peculiarly safe, and therefore well adapted to those sensitive natures, who from dread of pain shun

the busy world, and are terrified at the vicissitudes of active life. Those who are so constituted as to feel reverses deeply, while they are ill calculated to struggle against them, do well to choose the safe path ; though it would be absurd to say that all men should follow their example. Some shake off disappointment much more readily than others, and though they may fall, they soon rise again with alacrity. In vain would we dissuade such persons from the active scenes of life, and it would be ill if we could dissuade them, for these scenes are suited to their nature, and they would probably be less happy in any other. Still, it is true, that curiosity is almost the only passion than can hardly be too much encouraged ; first, because its object is highly useful ; secondly, because after youth it is apt to decline, rather than increase ; and lastly, because it is a solitary independent passion, which animates individual existence, without endangering our own peace of mind or the happiness of our neighbour. General benevolence is no doubt to be preferred, though this very rarely amounts to a passion, but when it does, it is the noblest of all ; so that the most social and the most solitary of our desires are the two which best we may promote.

Curiosity is the proper passion of studious men, and though it need not exclude other and auxiliary desires, such as desire of fame, or even of wealth, yet scarcely any one ever attained to excellence in science, who did not pursue knowledge chiefly for its own sake. An eagerness for fame or wealth is often a real obstacle to perfection, for it prompts us to con-

sult the passing taste of the day, and to rush before the public with crude and superficial performances. Even the desire of doing good may have a similar effect, especially when combined with the desire of extending our influence, for neither can bear to wait. The student certainly requires to be stimulated by every motive, but curiosity ought to be the chief, and order all the rest; for his direct object being the acquisition of truth, that passion alone which looks to it can never lead him astray.

Many of those pursuits which occupy mankind, and which are either manual, or uniform, or both, rather give pain than any direct pleasure, and, therefore, they are submitted to solely for the end in view. They are useful no doubt in expelling ennui, imaginary ills, and the whole train of melancholy and hypochondriacal feelings, and the cessation of labour always has a charm. But what an advantage is enjoyed by those who, having both taste and opportunity, addict themselves to intellectual pursuits; for as Bacon has observed, scientific and literary men are the only persons to whom labour itself is pleasurable. In common with others they have an agreeable object in view, but instead of thorns, their way is strewed with flowers.

A love of study is also valuable on this account, that it prevents us from dwelling too much on our own affairs. Much of that care and anxiety to be met with in men of the world arises from the habit of constantly pondering on their private concerns, for as every object grows more important in our eyes the more we reflect upon it, petty difficulties thus swell into insuperable obstacles, and distant dangers



into imminent ruin. On this subject I cannot do better than transcribe the words of one of the most talented women of her age. "The attention which study requires, by withdrawing our thoughts from personal interests, prepares us for judging them better. In reality, an abstract truth always becomes clearer the more we reflect upon it; but an affair, an event which affects us, is exaggerated and perverted, when we are occupied about it perpetually. Since the judgment which we ought to pass upon such matters depends upon a small number of ideas, simple and quickly perceived; whatever more time we give to them is wholly filled up with the illusions of the imagination and the heart. These illusions, becoming soon inseparable from the object itself, absorb the soul by the immense career which they open up to fears and regrets. The wise moderation of studious philosophers depends, perhaps, as much on the little time which they devote to dreaming on the events of life, as on the courage with which they support them."<sup>2</sup>

It is scarcely necessary to remark that this want of attention to our private affairs may sometimes be carried too far, as by those book-worms who entirely neglect their families. Some striking instances in point have fallen under my own observation; and others, no doubt, have met with similar. This seems to be an inconvenience peculiarly attached to the love of study on account of its solitary nature; for though other passions may engross the mind as much,

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<sup>2</sup> Madame de Staël *De L'Influence des Passions*, sect. iii. ch. iii.

they generally lead us into a career in which the interest of our family and friends is pursued along with our own. The enjoyments of the student being so private as not to be shared even with those immediately around him, these he is rather apt to forget, and since his pursuits are such as seldom lead to wealth, he may prove no better guardian of the fortune than of the mental improvement of his children. Men of business may have no more time to devote to their families than men of letters ; but they are generally more occupied about them ; partly because their line of life leads them more to think of domestic interests, partly because, in general, they meet with more sympathy at home. A man's family may not care much for his discoveries, but they are sure to be gratified with his increasing wealth and distinction. The life of a student is divided into two parts, having scarcely any point of contact, one passed in his closet, or with literary associates, the other in the society of his near relations ; whereas the active and the private life of a professional man are connected in many ways. Besides, literature being its own reward, its own delight, the student who requires recreation often seeks it by varying his pursuit ; while the man of business, being unused to such solitary pleasure, loves more to unbend with his family, when fatigued with the drudgery of the day. These observations chiefly apply to the case in which curiosity is the ruling passion, for if a man pursue literature chiefly as a source of gain, he partakes of the nature of one who is engaged in an ordinary profession.

Knowledge, it is said, puffeth up, and so it often

does, especially a smattering of knowledge ; and Bacon's remark on Atheism is also applicable to pride. " It is true," says he, " that a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to Atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to Religion ; for while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them, and go no further : but when it beholdeth the chain of them confederate and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity."<sup>3</sup> In like manner, a little philosophy may rouse the pride of man, but depth in philosophy bringeth him back to humility ; for if he go just so far as to be sensible of his superiority over the mass, without advancing far enough to perceive how little he knows as compared with what is to be known, he will probably feel elated. Every thing depends upon the way in which we institute the comparison, whether we compare our attainments with what we have left behind, or with what remains before ; and he who is young in philosophy can hardly avoid looking backward, for thus he becomes sensible of his advancement, while the novelty of his proficiency excites both astonishment and delight. Nor can he easily escape the conclusion that what gives him such gratification must really be something extraordinary. Pride then is the rock which has proved fatal to many who are called philosophers ; for rather than think with the vulgar they have run into paradox and infidelity. With persons of this stamp, the greatest objection to any opinion is, that it is commonly received ; and were unbelief to become general, they

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<sup>3</sup> Essays ; of Atheism.

might take up religion. Modesty, on the other hand, is the characteristic of real superiority, both as a cause and an effect ; a cause, for the consciousness of our ignorance is the first step to knowledge ; an effect, for the more the mind expands, the more it becomes sensible how much remains to be known.

Another sort of curiosity which may be just mentioned, is that which prompts us to discover and explore distant lands, or, at least, to visit countries which have been long known to others, but not to us. Travel is the first of amusements, and it may be no less instructive than amusing ; but curiosity is necessary to urge us to undertake it, or to give it the full zest ; for travel always requires an effort and the sacrifice of our favourite ease. When this first effort is got over, travel may be one of the greatest enjoyments in life, or, at least, may dissipate care and sorrow ; for it combines many elements of happiness, activity, variety, novelty, and contrast, gratifies our desire of knowledge, and our taste for the beauties of art and nature. To some, love of travel may become a perfect passion composed of many elementary desires, and to all who enjoy health, it might diversify and enliven existence, if indolence could once be overcome. How important to nurse the curiosity which leads to a resource so rational, innocent, and lively !

It must be allowed that curiosity, like every other passion, may lead us into danger and calamity. The fall of man was owing to female curiosity ; and many of the descendants of our first parents have been victims to a similar desire. How many travellers have paid with their lives for their eagerness to explore the interior of Africa ; and how many have brought

ruin on themselves by diving into secrets in which they had no concern ! In the novel of Caleb Williams, we have a highly wrought picture of the fatal effects of curiosity, for all the misfortunes of the hero were owing to his irresistible desire to peep into the iron chest.

We have already remarked that curiosity may harden the heart to an extraordinary degree, in cases where the gratification of the passion is at stake, as we instanced in those physiologists who are in the habit of making experiments upon living animals. The first physiologist in France has obtained a sad notoriety on this account. It would be rash to say that experiments ought never to be made upon live animals, but he who undertakes them without a decided end, who prolongs them unnecessarily, and exhibits them merely to gratify the vain curiosity of by-standers, or to make a show of his own discoveries, ought to be told that nothing is more detestable than science leading to inhumanity. The more important is anything, the more alarmed we are at its abuse, for we cannot tell where this may end, and we dread to lose what we had always thought a friend ; and, therefore, the perverters of science, as well as the perverters of religion, are worthy of all execration.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> We ought to hope that physiology may in time improve the practice of medicine, but as yet how little has it done so ! It would be difficult to say what practical benefit has been derived even from that greatest of discoveries, the circulation of the blood. It certainly produced no decided revolution in medicine, however much it may have modified the various theories on that subject. In anatomy, physiology, and surgery, the French have no superiors ; but what shall we say of their physicians ! While other sciences have advanced, as it were, in a straight line, medicine

Lastly, curiosity may degenerate into a petty inquisitiveness leading to gossip and scandal, and constitute a mere busy body. Indeed, this form of the desire often survives all others ; as we see in those who, having lost all taste for useful knowledge, continue to busy themselves in prying into their neighbour's affairs. This sort of curiosity is more common in villages and small towns, than in capitals, partly because it is there more easily gratified, partly because those afford fewer objects of amusement. There is far more gossiping in Edinburgh or Bath, than in London, and more in London than in Paris, where the population is more condensed, and where there are fewer idle servants and retainers. Where each house is occupied by one family only, the neighbours may know something of what they do, and what company they keep ; but where there are, perhaps, a dozen families under the same roof, it is difficult to learn anything about any of them. Besides, it is the custom in London to keep many more servants than in Paris, and these have often nothing better to do than to seek out all the scandal of the neighbourhood.

#### SECTION VII.—*Desire of Continued Existence.*

THE last desire which we purpose to consider, is that which is essential to all the others and to every enjoyment, Continued Existence.

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has rather revolved in a circle, returning periodically to the same point. I say this not to dissuade any one from the study of physiology, but only from wantonly practising on living animals, for the torture we inflict is certain, while the utility to be gained is exceedingly remote and doubtful.

Desire of life is of a simple and also a very abstract nature; for it looks but to one object, and to that object in the most general point of view, without reference to the various states in which it may exist. It regards not the various modifications of our being, but that being itself in whatever condition it may be found. So the fear which corresponds to the desire, looks not to particular circumstances which may attend or follow death, but to death in whatever form it may occur. No doubt those circumstances may diminish or increase our horror, but still there is a dread totally independent of them, which arises on the bare thought of dissolution.

It is evident that desire of life cannot be one of our earliest desires, for in order to wish for the continuance of anything, we must have some idea of what it is, and also be able to conceive its loss. Now for a long time, a child has no notion either of life or death; and therefore he can neither desire the one nor fear the other.

————— A simple child  
That lightly draws its breath,  
And feels its life in every limb,  
What should it know of death?<sup>1</sup>

After a time the idea of death arises from witnessing it in animals, and with it comes a notion of life by contrast; and then when the child is told that he also shall cease to be, he begins to conceive what is meant, and feels a vague and transitory dread, followed by a wish for existence.<sup>†</sup> This is the way in which

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<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth.

the desire is first called forth, and it may long be dormant for want of knowledge and even of ideas.

Afterwards, many causes contribute to increase the desire of life. The first and most evident is the pleasure we feel in existence ; for it is difficult to conceive that we could heartily long for that which was associated with no enjoyment. Whether or not the consideration of this pleasure precede the primary movement of desire, may, indeed, be a question for metaphysicians, and is certainly one of curiosity ; but be this as it may, we cannot doubt that thoughts of pleasure strongly act upon it afterwards. And so intimate is the association between life and enjoyment, the means and the end, that it is not wonderful that the last should often be overlooked, and life be desired for its own sake ; as is the case with other things in general, and with riches in particular. Wealth is desired first for its various uses, but afterwards for itself ; and in some instances, it is so much loved that its uses are unheeded or forgotten. So likewise we meet with persons who are so much attached to life, that for the sake of it they would sacrifice almost everything which renders life a blessing ;

“ *Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causam.*”

Thus desire of existence becomes a feeling distinct from every other ; even from the general desire of enjoyment out of which it may have arisen, and whereby it is at least confirmed.

Though love of life for its own sake, depends so much upon the happiness associated with it, yet far from varying in proportion to our enjoyments, desire



of existence is often weakest in the young, who are full of delight and hope, and most intense in the old, who have fewer interests present or in prospect. Disease has frequently the same effect as age, and causes us to cling to life with unwonted pertinacity. These phenomena are readily accounted for on the principle of *privation*, for when we fear to lose anything, we always value it the more. Age and disease, by bringing death more near, cause us to fear the loss of life, and hence to prize the remains of it more highly. While there is nothing to suggest the probability of death, we neither really fear it, nor positively desire life, as is the case with the high-spirited, the hopeful, and the thoughtless ; but when danger, age, infirmities, low spirits, or a reflective turn, calls up the king of terrors, the wish for existence, which was formerly dormant, rises into full activity. Here fear not only stimulates the desire as in other cases, but it seems to do more, for it causes this to spring up. But for the former we never should have known the latter.

Though a general resemblance runs through all our desires, in their phenomena, causes, and consequences, yet some are more alike than others. There is probably no passion which so much resembles desire of life as avarice. Avarice is wont to increase with age, and so is desire of existence ; and as fear is the grand cause or promoter of the one, so of the other. Those who enjoy life most, are often prodigal of it by running into dangers and excesses ; as they who most enjoy riches, are apt to become spendthrifts : while the old and infirm, who derive little pleasure

from life, frequently cling to it eagerly, as misers who have no comforts are the most anxious for riches. The general principle to be deduced from these facts is this, that the intensity of our desires depends not merely on the amount of enjoyment expected, but also on the degree of fear of missing or losing the object ; and according as one or other is most present to the mind, so the passion will change its character. In youth there is comparatively little foresight, and consequently little apprehension, but the zest for enjoyment is keen, while in age it is just the contrary ; and, therefore, the passions of the former will be roused by the prospect of pleasure, and those of the latter will follow the impulse of fear. Where the mind is naturally timid, or unusually reflective and low-spirited, the same results will follow at whatever period of our career ; and we shall witness youth hoarding like age, or sighing for length of life. Fear is either constitutional or the result of circumstances, particularly of early education and subsequent experience of danger, and in general is promoted rather than cured by reflection ; for danger, like other things, swells into importance the more it is dwelt upon. To remember, may be prudent ; but we must forget, to become courageous.

Thus conscience<sup>2</sup> does make cowards of us all ;  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought ;  
And enterprises of great pith and moment,  
With this regard, their currents turn awry,  
And lose the name of action.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Conscience, *reflection*.

<sup>3</sup> Hamlet, Act iii.

Desire of life is a feeling common to all men, certainly as lasting as any, and even apt to increase with age, but it seems to be surpassed in intensity by other desires. Not only can it be mastered by many other passions, but it may even be extinguished, and replaced by a contrary wish. Desire of glory, or of self-approbation, and their opposites, fear of disgrace, or of self-condemnation; love, ambition, patriotism, even covetousness and curiosity, can so far conquer our love of life, as to make us rush into imminent danger. Nay, men have been led by them to submit to certain death. If Regulus had chosen to break his word, he might have remained at Rome in safety; and had Sir Thomas More and Lady Jane Grey agreed to profess a change of religious opinion, they would, probably, have escaped the scaffold. Desire of posthumous fame, or fear of being humbled and disgraced by submitting to the power of Cæsar, prompted Cato to die by his own hand. The *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*, was a principle not only taught, but practised by the ancient Romans.<sup>4</sup>

It may be said that, in very many cases, men do not see the danger to which they expose themselves, or else they would not be so bold, and this we have already allowed. But that they do not see it, is exactly because they are under the influence of excitement, that is of some other passion, which blinds their judgment and expels desire of life. This is an instance of the principle of *occupation*; for any strong feeling may so engross the mind as to ex-

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<sup>4</sup> Consider the Fabii, the Decii, &c. &c.

clude every other, and suspend the exercise of reason. If the danger be such as is manifest to a disinterested spectator, though not to the party concerned, it is evident that passion alone makes the difference. "The pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war," greatly fill the mind, and prevent it from dwelling on danger; and fear of death, when it does recur, is overcome by fear of ignominy. When danger is distant, hopefulness and courage may be owing partly to ignorance, partly to impetuosity of desire; but when it is near and palpable, they must be attributed to the latter alone. Two men who have quarrelled, and agreed to exchange shots within a few paces of each other, must be aware of the danger; but revenge or honour overcomes the wish for existence. How can men be found to make up the forlorn hope? In this case, death is all but certain, and it must be known to be so, yet in general there is no demur. This fact is really extraordinary, and admits but of one explanation, that desire of life is inferior in intensity to others. The most unwholesome occupations are eagerly sought after, provided the pay be high; though it be well known that life will be shortened.<sup>5</sup> Indeed when we reflect upon the as-

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<sup>5</sup> The forest of Fontainebleau is full of sandy rocks, which are much used for paving the roads in France. The men who are employed in quarrying these stones and forming them into squares, never live long, for they are constantly inhaling the dust; but as they get good wages there is no want of hands. The same remark applies to the trade of knife-grinders and many others. St. Roch being the patron saint of stone-cutters, when these fall into consumption, it is commonly said at Fontainebleau that they are *pris par St. Roch*.

tonishing recklessness of man in hazarding that which can never be recalled, we might sometimes almost doubt whether he valued life at all, and though ignorance and thoughtlessness may in part account for the phenomenon, yet unless the wish for existence were weaker than other active principles of our nature, we could not solve the mystery. When men are actuated by any strong passion, we generally find them thoughtful enough on that score, and ready to seize every opportunity of securing their object. If then desire of existence were really a powerful passion, would life be so frequently hazarded, nay, almost thrown away?

But desire of life may not only be conquered by a stronger passion, but it may be replaced by a contrary wish, and instead of loving we may come to hate our existence. Bodily suffering and grief in some form or other are the only real causes of the phenomenon. This observation applies to the case in which death is positively wished for, since to vanquish the fear of death is one thing, really to desire it another. Moreover the remark does not apply to those instances where death is sought as a passage to a higher state of existence, as we are told it was by some of the disciples of Socrates; and still is by Indian widows, who burn themselves on the tombs of their husbands. In the early ages of Christianity, when zeal was warm and faith steadfast, the crown of martyrdom was positively sought for by many, so that edicts against voluntary martyrdom became necessary. In such cases desire of life is far from being extinguished, it only assumes another form. But he

who has long lain on a bed of sickness, and long endured acute pain, becomes at last disgusted with life, which affords him no enjoyment, and welcomes death as a happy release from suffering.<sup>6</sup>

Nor is man always content to wait his natural end, but sometimes terminates his career by an act of self-destruction. This must be allowed to be one of the most remarkable phenomena of human nature. That men, often in the prime of their days, even in delightful youth, possessing those faculties which render man an image of the Deity, and with all this beautiful and stirring world around them, should voluntarily give up every thing, and madly rush to the tomb, can hardly fail to strike a philosophic mind. How can men thus fling away every present advantage, and every hope in the future; or how, in a word, can they will their own ruin?

The pressure of calamity can alone explain the mystery. Desire of life may be extinguished by

<sup>6</sup> Mental distress may have the same effect. Thus Constance, in an agony of grief, exclaims:—

— O amiable lovely death !

Come, grin on me ; and I will think thou smil'st,  
And buss thee as thy wife ! Misery's love,

O, come to me ! *King John*, Act v. Scene 4.

Job asks, “ Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul ; which long for death, but it cometh not ; and dig for it more than for hid treasures ; which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave ? ” ch. iii. 20. Again, “ My soul chooseth strangling and death, rather than my life. I loathe it ; I would not live alway : let me alone ; for my days are vanity. ” Ch. vii. 15.

acute or lasting misery of any kind, whether sudden or unexpected reverses of fortune, loss of character, disappointment in love, or in any violent passion, constitutional melancholy leading on to madness, or lastly, as is said, by ennui.<sup>7</sup> Thus there are two sorts of unhappiness which may lead to the same result, the one violent and sudden, the other slow and gradual; the former insupportable from its present acuteness, the other from its long continuance, which increases every momentary pain by the remembrance of all that is past. But the case of real madness excepted, suicide most frequently proceeds from the pressure of some violent calamity, which for a time renders life so wretched that the unfortunate individual thinks he cannot get rid of it too soon. Could he reflect, he might change his opinion; but reflect he cannot, for his mind is wholly occupied with grief. This is, probably, the most remarkable instance that can be brought forward of the effect of occupation; for the soul is so filled with the painful emotion, that past and future, self and kindred, interest and duty, are all alike forgotten.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> “Nay, Seneca adds, *niceness* and *satiety*; *Cogita quam diu eadem faceres; Mori velle non tantum Fortis, aut Miser, sed etiam Fastidiosus potest*. A man would die though he were neither valiant nor miserable, only upon a weariness to do the same thing so oft over and over.” *Bacon’s Essays*, Of Death. A few years ago a young man killed himself at Versailles, and the cause assigned by himself in writing was the *tedium vitæ*! A young man complaining of weariness of life!

<sup>8</sup> Take among a thousand, the case of Nourrit, the French actor, who, in the prime of life, and with a large family to provide for, killed himself in a fit of vexation, because he thought that his talents had not been duly appreciated.

Indifference to life comes near to a positive wish for its termination, and this also is produced by bodily pain or by mental misery. It is worthy of remark, however, that bodily pain seems never to be a cause of suicide ; whether it be that grief is more engrossing and uninterrupted than uneasy sensation, or that corporal suffering so lowers the tone of the mind, as to render it incapable of vigorous desire of any kind. Acute bodily pain rarely continues long without an interval of ease, and ease is then a positive delight, so that when the pain recurs, there is always hope of its speedy termination ; whereas mental agony has no remission.

From what has been above said, we should suppose that characters of impetuous passion and keen sensibility ought to be more liable to suicide, than slow, thoughtful, and persevering natures ; for suicide may sometimes be a deliberate act, but it is much more frequently the result of sudden impulse. Agreeably to this view, it is far more common among the young and middle-aged than the old. This fact, at the same time, serves to corroborate what has been above remarked, that desire of life is apt to increase with age ; for this of course is directly opposed to self-destruction. Moral, and particularly religious principle, are other counteracting causes ; and if these decline among a people of hasty temper, we cannot be surprised to find suicides multiply in an unwonted degree.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Every one must have been struck by the number of suicides which annually take place in Paris. In the year 1826, there were 511 by the official account ; and the number has probably



From the principle above stated, that desire of life is apt to be overcome by many other passions, we may derive one great practical application. This is the inadequacy of capital punishments to prevent the commission of crime. If mere love of existence be frequently insufficient to restrain other passions, neither will it be a due check to the passions of the malefactor. Conscience and religion may no doubt lend their aid, but if these be once overcome, fear of death will be powerless. This conclusion seems also agreeable to experience, for the inefficacy of capital punishments has long been a theme for remark and wonder. Mr. Livingstone, framer of the new penal code for Louisiana, has brought forward many exam-

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increased since, for we read of them now more than ever. Out of the above 511, there were 417 cases in which the causes of the act are assigned. These were love, family distresses, pecuniary embarrassments, and gaming. Under this last head there are 69 cases. We may remark, that it does not follow from this statement, that these were the only instances in which gaming was the cause of suicide; for in nearly 100 the cause is unknown, and it is impossible to say to what extent those pecuniary embarrassments, &c. may have had their origin in gaming. It was formerly thought that England exceeded all countries in the number of suicides, but this was probably a mistake arising from the greater publicity given to them through the coroner's inquest and the press. If a coroner's jury were to sit upon every such case in France, especially in Paris, how frightful would the array appear! The French are a hasty people, and there is probably less religion in Paris than in any city in Europe, particularly among the lower and middle ranks; for whatever religion there may be, it is almost confined to the upper. The churches are pretty well attended by the rich and their servants, but are altogether deserted by the working people. Nor do the morals of the latter stand much higher than their religion.

ples to prove how little influence has the fear of death upon hardened criminals. This, at least, should be a reason for confining capital punishments to a few flagrant cases, for would we take away life to no purpose ?

On the consequences of love of existence, little need be said. It is often made a ground of reproach, because it indicates fear, and is intimately associated with cowardice ; and to this unquestionably it leads, when it becomes excessive and overpowers all other desires. And as nothing can be more unfavourable to happiness than cowardice, so an over-weening love of life which tends to it, must also be opposed to felicity. Still, this is a feeling essential to our own preservation, and a safeguard to that of others ; for whatever its strength may be, to that extent it is a motive to prevent us from injuring our neighbour, and were it destroyed, the feelings of humanity would commonly be extirpated also. One who did not regard his own life, would be fit for the most daring acts, whether for good or ill ; and most probably for the latter, since he could hardly be supposed to have much tenderness of soul. He would be a truly formidable person. No doubt he might be a hero, but he would be more likely to prove a villain. For none are so courageous as those who are indifferent to life ; and such indifference generally proceeds from misery, and vice, the parent of misery. This recklessness is an element necessary to form a monster like unto Fieschi ; and were it to become general, would be dangerous to any society. Nowhere, probably, is it more widely spread, than among the lowest popu-

lace of Paris, and nowhere, therefore, are there better materials for revolt. The *gamins de Paris* are a very peculiar race, some of them mere boys, all utterly unprincipled, reckless of their own lives, and indifferent to those of others, but delighting in the excitement of conflict, and in the hopes of revolutionary triumph. Such is the army ever ready to obey the word of those ardent political leaders who abound in the French metropolis.

Be it remembered, that the very same effects may be produced by a firm and generous desire overcoming the fear of death, or by indifference to life, the result of vice and misery. Therefore, the appearance of courage, far from being a sure token of excellence, may be a sign of the contrary. None show greater symptoms of courage than the blood-thirsty rioters of Paris. Duelling is defended as necessary to make people behave themselves, but if we fear not to lose our life, what becomes of this check?

But not only the habits and temper of mind which render men indifferent to their own existence, are also at war with their humanity, but love of our own life has a direct tendency to make us respect our neighbour's. In general, what we value ourselves, we suppose to be valued by others, and the feelings which we best know we treat with most tenderness. Accordingly, the wish for self-preservation warning us that others wish alike, we cannot but sympathise with them, and feel averse to the shedding of blood. And this reluctance may extend itself, not only to our fellow-creatures, but even to the animal creation; for to one who reflects, and is not rendered dull by cus-

tom, it must always appear awful to destroy that work of Omnipotence, that first of all wonders, that admirable contrivance and sublime mystery, which we call by the name of LIFE.

Though desire of life be necessary to our own preservation, and a safeguard to that of others, it is about the least agreeable of the passions, because so much mixed with fear. In this respect, again, it bears a strong resemblance to avarice. The desire of saving and the desire of living are not only useful but absolutely essential, in a degree, and were they eradicated, dreadful would be the consequences; and though they may err by excess, and even wholly expel other and nobler desires, yet their absence would be as fatal to man, as to the earth the want of rain, which, though necessary to vegetation and beauty, may sometimes flood our fields, and ruin the hopes of the husbandman.

II. Hitherto we have considered desire of life as having this world only in view, and as limited to the extension of an existence which we know must come to a close. But the wishes of man are not to be bounded by the transitory scene before him. Neither death, nor corruption, can restrain those eager hopes which look beyond the grave to a life without termination; “where we shall renew our strength; where we shall mount up with wings as eagles; where we shall run and not be weary; we shall walk and not faint.” What a subject for contemplation is this! what a source of emotion! and what interest and dignity is added to our present life, if it be the preparation for a better! However valuable anything may be in

itself, it greatly rises in our estimation if it lead to something more ; and, therefore, our mortal career must assume a far higher importance, if it point to immortality. Hence we are brought to entertain a greater respect for our species, and more exalted notions as to the dignity of human nature ; sentiments not only exceedingly favourable to humanity, but encouraging to every one who really aims at excellence. The more noble any animal is, the less can we bear to see it abused, as we are more shocked with cruelty to a horse or elephant, than to a dog or cat ; and therefore the notion of immortality which ennobles our race is favourable to good treatment from man to man. Though the soul were supposed to perish with the body, philanthropists might still wish to see the negro at liberty ; but how cold and feeble would be their efforts as compared with those of men warmed with religious zeal, who abhor slavery, not only as inhuman, but as degrading to an immortal Being. Accordingly, it is impossible to deny that the abolition of the slave trade, and since, of slavery itself in our colonies, has been owing chiefly to the strenuous exertions of the friends of religion.

Having endeavoured, in another work, to trace the connection between Religion and Politics, and having shown that the former is peculiarly favourable to civil liberty, and hence to the welfare of society ;<sup>10</sup> it here remains to be seen what is the influence of religion upon the temporal happiness of the individual. As the former question belongs to political, so the latter to moral science, and they ought to be considered

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<sup>10</sup> See Political Discourses, Dis. ii. on Civil Liberty.

apart in works dedicated to these subjects respectively.

Whatever religion may have prevailed among any portion of mankind, at any time or place, it has embraced at least two fundamental dogmas. These are the belief in the existence of a Deity or Deities, *i. e.* of a Being or Beings superior to man in power and intelligence, and the belief that He takes some interest in the affairs of men, and exercises an influence over them. In order that religion should be really a living principle and have some effect upon practice, these two dogmas are necessary ; for the existence of a Deity, the Creator of the universe, would be a purely speculative truth, were He not supposed to be its governor. Even in that case, such a Being would be justly considered as the noblest object of human contemplation, and to trace His attributes from the works we see would be one of the most elevating and improving exercises of our reasoning faculties. The discovery and conception of one all-wise and all-powerful Creator of the universe, would of itself prove how admirable a creature is man, how fitted for the purest and highest intellectual joys, and therefore how degraded he ought to appear in his own eyes when given up to vice and sensuality.

Though such a Being might occupy a philosophic mind, yet the belief in His existence could have no direct influence on practice, were He supposed to take no part in the government of human affairs. A Deity or Deities of this nature, might be granted by those who are the most opposed to religion ; as for instance, by the poet Lucretius :

Omnis enim per se divûm natura necesse est  
 Immortali ævo summa cum pace fruatur,  
 Semota ab nostris rebus, sejunctaque longe.<sup>11</sup>

The belief in a Providence then, is as essential to practical religion, as the belief in a Deity to religion of any kind.

Though these two fundamental dogmas are found in every religion which really has prevailed upon the earth, yet they have been modified in a great variety of ways. Sometimes the notions of God have been as gross and narrow as the minds of the savages who entertained them; at other times, they have been large and refined: here many deities have been worshipped; there one only has been adored. Among some sects, temporal advantages have been chiefly looked to from God, among others, a happy immortality in a life to come. This in particular is the article of faith which we here propose to consider, as it influences the happiness of man in his present transitory state.

It cannot be the object of a work such as this to prove any of the great doctrines of religion; but supposing them true, or at least believed to be so, to trace the moral consequences of such belief.

The writings of moralists and poets have at all times abounded with reflections on the miseries which flesh is heir to, and allowing these to have been somewhat exaggerated, in order to strengthen an argument or excite emotion, there will still remain far too much of truth. And though it be further allowed, that

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<sup>11</sup> De Rerum Natura, lib. i. v. 58.

authors have not unfrequently been men of a melancholy temperament, and, therefore, inclined to view everything through a dark medium, yet after every deduction, the sum of ill in the world must always be thought considerable. Some ills peculiarly belong to certain conditions of life, others to certain ages, others again to sex, to original constitution of mind, to bad education, corrupt systems of morals, or tyrannical government. Evils there are the result of our own ill conduct, as well as misfortunes for which we are in no wise to blame. Some calamities can be guarded against, while others cannot be prevented, nor even foreseen. Many admit of a remedy, or at least a palliative, and few are altogether incurable. But if there be a sorrow common to the whole human race, to every condition, sex, and age, except infancy and early childhood, under every clime and every government, if, moreover, it be a permanent sorrow, capable of being forgotten for a moment, but always liable to recur, and if the cause thereof can never be removed, nor the grief itself be greatly mitigated by philosophy, then, whatever may be the intensity of such sorrow, on account of the universality and duration, it ought to be considered the first of human evils. This is the painful feeling which arises from the prospect of death. Men may try to get rid of this feeling, and by means of occupation they may succeed for a time, but it is only so long as they are completely absorbed by something else, for at the first vacant moment, and on the slightest cause, the idea of our mortality is recalled. So prepared is the mind for this impression, that there is scarcely an in-



cident which may not call it up. Not only the death of others, illness, and the changing countenances around us, but every sparrow which falls, or insect that is crushed, nay, every leaf which fades, or sun that sets, suggests our own decay.<sup>12</sup>

The loss of youth is of itself a severe sorrow. That the spring of life is gradually creeping away from us with all its delightful illusions, never to return again, is a thought which strikes upon the heart like the knell of a departed friend. What truth and pathos in these simple Italian words !

*Oh gioventù primavera della vita !*

*Oh primavera gioventù dell' anno !*

Who has not sighed over the loss of those halcyon days, when life was new and everything amused ; when we were the hope of our elders, and the object of their fond regard, and, perhaps, were generally admired, wherever we turned our steps ? To women, especially, the loss of youth is severe, above all to beautiful women, whose early life is perpetual triumph and joy.

But if we thus grieve over departed youth, how much more do we dread the approach of age and infirmities, with death to close the scene ! The period of manhood may still be one of great enjoyment, and

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<sup>12</sup> And slight withal may be the things which bring  
Back on the heart the weight which it would fling  
Aside for ever : it may be a sound—  
A tone of music—summer's eve—or spring—  
A flower—the wind—the ocean—which shall wound,  
Striking the electric chain wherewith we're darkly bound.

*Childe Harold.*

even age may have some compensation, but what can reconcile us to the tomb? Passion may make us forget or brave death, but misery alone can make us seek it; and the spectre so far from losing its menacing aspect by being steadfastly gazed on, only becomes the more hideous. In this case, forgetfulness, if possible, is the best philosophy, and thoughtlessness is to be preferred to deep reflection; for no reasoning can persuade us that what robs us of all enjoyment can be other than the greatest evil. On the contrary, the more we reflect, the more awful does the evil appear, and, therefore, since it is inevitable, true wisdom would teach us to think of it as little as possible. But we cannot drive away the thought entirely, for do what we will it returns. This is the wormwood which casts a dash of bitterness even into the sweetest cup. It is the *amari aliquid* which for ever is rising up *medio de fonte leporum*, to sober the most joyous spirits; and though in the tumult of midnight mirth and revelry it be forgotten, yet "morn's reflective hour" brings it back again. The greatest advantage of childhood is ignorance of death; for without such ignorance, how could there be that unconquerable buoyancy, that perfect light-heartedness, which constitute its peculiar charm? Sleep also has been celebrated for the same reason, particularly by a great poet who represents us as

"Pleased for a while to heave unconscious breath,  
Then wake to wrestle with the dread of death."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Lara.

This dread may not amount to terror, but it is always mournful and depressing.

“ One fatal remembrance, one sorrow that throws  
Its bleak shade alike o’er our joys and our woes ;  
Than which life nothing brighter nor blacker can bring,  
For which joy has no balm, and affliction no sting.” <sup>14</sup>

What ought to be the gratitude of mankind to one who should point out a cure for this universal sorrow ? If those who have invented anything to obviate some partial inconvenience, or increase the common comforts of life, are really worthy of praise, what glory should be his who could point out a remedy for an ill felt by all mankind, by the intellectual and reflective even more than the stupid and the thoughtless ; on account of which we could almost deprecate foresight, and long for a happy blindness ? What avails our boasted reason if it cannot make us happy ? nay, if it only show us more clearly the magnitude of the coming ill ? and teach us that, in this case, ignorance and thoughtlessness are better than all philosophy ?

But where philosophy is powerless, religion comes to our aid. The hopes of a life hereafter can alone allay that universal sorrow which arises on the prospect of death ; and, as this, we have seen, is the first of human evils, so the belief in a futurity is the first of all consolations. Philosophy may meet death with dogged sullenness, and may even make a show of courage to gain the applause of men, but nothing but religion can really gild the tomb. If death be

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<sup>14</sup> Moore’s Melodies.

annihilation, it must always be a cause of sorrow ; but if only a passage to another life, it loses, or may lose, nearly all its bitterness.

This then is the grand, the fundamental argument in favour of a belief in immortality. And the argument appears to me of such weight, that were the objections against religion magnified out of all due proportion, they would still be as mere chaff in the balance. Nothing can outweigh this one immense advantage, that by means of religion a remedy is found for the greatest of human evils. Some, no doubt, do not avail themselves of the remedy, or even scorn it, displeased with the necessary conditions ; as the sick frequently reject the medicines that are best for them ; but are these therefore worthless ? Is bark of no use in ague because some dislike the taste ? Indeed, so paramount does the above advantage appear to me, that I could be almost tempted to pursue the argument no further ; convinced, that in comparison with this, every other consideration must sink, and that the inconveniences which may attend religion, deduct as little from its sum of good, as the nibbling rats in a farm yard from the amount of those stacks of corn which are to feed a populous neighbourhood.

But as some readers might not be satisfied with so summary a discussion on such a subject, I shall go on to remark in the next place, that as religious hope can alone reconcile us to our own death, so it is the only real consolation for the loss of our relatives or friends. Time may at last deaden us to such loss, but what a period of sorrow must first be gone through,

if we are never to see them again ! And be it remembered, that this is one of the most general causes of grief, for who ever lived long without having to deplore the death of some one who was dear to him ? This source of woe is so much in the nature of things, that every one ought to expect it, but whenever the blow falls, it is not felt the less. Shall we therefore shut up all the avenues of the heart, as some philosophers have recommended, and strive to entrench ourselves behind a wall of insensibility ? In the first place this is impossible, for we cannot help loving somebody ; and if we could, we should be more to be pitied than those who are liable to be deprived of the object of their tenderness, for we should throw away one of the brightest gems which adorn our mortal crown. Shall we at once and for ever discard this precious stone, because at some time or other it may be broken or lost ?

The loss of those we love is, therefore, an event general and unavoidable, and on that account, as well as by reason of the intensity of the grief, it must be considered as one of our principal evils. If we are to meet again, we may still deplore the separation, for who that love ever part without sorrow ? but if we are severed for ever, what can save us from despair ? Without religion, the condition of some persons would be one of utter wretchedness. Some there are, endued, perhaps, with unusual sensibility, doomed to see one dear object drop off after another, till at last they are left in the decline of life, childless and forlorn. Without hope in a futurity, what possible consolation can we find for such sufferers ? The

remainder of existence, and possibly a long remainder, must to them be a miserable blank, a melancholy waste leading to a darksome abyss. Gloomy and cheerless they must slowly approach the tomb, without enjoyment, yet still clinging to this life for want of faith in another. But let religious hope once beam on these blighted souls, and the dark becomes light, and despair gives place to serenity. Such have I known with feelings peculiarly keen, who, amidst the deepest afflictions, and enfeebled by bodily illness, have maintained a wonderful cheerfulness, and declared with unaffected simplicity, that they really were happy.

Though religion be necessary to every thinking being, yet there are two classes of persons to whom it is peculiarly valuable. These are first the unfortunate, unhappily too numerous a class; and secondly characters of a meditative and rather melancholy turn, who see too clearly on how insecure a basis rests the fabric of human prosperity. The latter above all require something solid in futurity, for they can blind themselves neither to the exceeding instability of human affairs, nor to the fact that every day that dawns brings them nearer to their end. Religious hope is the only anchor on which such can venture to rely, amidst the storms and shipwrecks of this nether world.

Not only is religion the first of all consolations, but it also affords the best of all pursuits; and thus it is fitted for active as well as contemplative felicity. When our happiness hereafter is supposed in part to depend upon our exertions here, a desire is created

which unites the advantages common to all our desires with others peculiar to itself, and has few of the inconveniences to which the rest are liable. The object is of sufficient importance to occupy a rational soul, and expel vacuity of mind with all its accompanying evils. He who is animated with the hope of immortality, and whose actions are directed to that end, has within him a source of interest even to his dying day ; and though other desires should fade, and other pleasures should cease, if warmed by religious zeal he will still enjoy life to the last. The ordinary charities, even the ordinary courtesies of life, acquire dignity and importance, when viewed as parts of a scheme leading on to the joys of eternity.

All our other desires may terminate in disappointment or satiety ; for we may fail in obtaining our object, or when obtained it may gratify us less than we expected, or lastly we may tire of it speedily ; but religious hope knows nothing of all this. Since the prize is placed beyond the tomb, the race on earth is endless, the interest never-failing, an interest neither to be marred by misfortune nor damped by repetition ; and as this can be said of no pursuit besides, therefore the religious career is preferable to every other.

In common with every desire incident to human nature, religious zeal is liable to two drawbacks ; it is apt to be mixed with fear, and it may run into excess. That there is no desire without fear is an universal axiom ; and that whatever interests man may absorb him too much, is also incontrovertible. Therefore it is no argument against religion in par-

ticular, that it is liable to fear and to excess, unless it can be shown to be so in a peculiar degree.

It might be considered by some as a sufficient answer to the first objection, to say, that the conduct of men in general sufficiently proves that they are not under the influence of religious fear. But as it might be retorted, and with truth, that the reason why many have no fear is, that they seldom seriously think of a future life any more than they do of death; we must turn to those who really are religious. Now I would ask, does experience show that these persons are peculiarly victims to fear? The contrary is notorious. Religious persons are often grave, like all men who are engaged in any serious undertaking, and they are frequently averse to noisy amusements; but follow them home, watch them narrowly, and endeavour to read their inmost soul, and they will be found the most cheerful of human beings. If this be so, hope must greatly preponderate over fear. We speak of course of those who really are pious, and not of hypocritical pretenders, of whom there are so many.

Besides, it must be borne in mind, that the fear complained of is not vain but salutary, since it tends to deter men from vicious actions. If it do not deter them the fear cannot be very intense, and if it do, then it is highly beneficial, and ceases when it has done its part. In the former case men have little reason to complain, and in the latter they ought to be glad that they are alive to religious fear. We might as well quarrel with conscience, because it detracts from the enjoyments of the wicked, as with holy dread, because it gives some uneasiness to those



whom it cannot cure. No one has a right to find fault with a pain which has an useful tendency, and of which he can get rid if he choose to amend his life. The terrors of law may be very annoying to thieves and murderers, but would we abolish the criminal code to please such reprobates?

But there is no extremity to which men will not sometimes fly when they want to establish a point. Thus I have somewhere seen an attempt to prove the injurious effects of religion, from some rare and extreme cases of terror met with in convents and monasteries. In the utter seclusion of such retreats, in the want of all ordinary interests and of every little amusement, and in the absence of all discussion which might show the worthlessness of many outward observances, it may occasionally happen that the neglect of such rites, even though unintentional, shall cause a real alarm in the mind of the ignorant worshipper; and this alarm may be so frequently repeated, as at last to poison his whole existence, or even to impair his reason. But were these instances far more common than they are, what would they prove? Nothing but this, that man was not made for complete retirement and inactivity; that solitude and concentration nurse a ruling passion, possibly even to madness; and that religion without knowledge degenerates into mere superstition. The life led in convents and monasteries is anomalous and artificial in the highest degree, and if we do wage war with nature, she will be apt to take her revenge. From the effects of religious impressions under such extraordinary circumstances, no deductions can be

drawn as to their influence in a natural state of society, where ignorance is put to flight by discussion, and numerous cares and amusements prevent us from being wholly engrossed by any one passion.

Even in common life, distressing instances may be found of victims to religious fear, among those naturally weak-minded or enfeebled by bodily illness, innocent though they be, but especially among such as once were dissolute characters. The last by a fit of sickness and the near prospect of death, may be roused to religious impressions in which fear shall greatly predominate. To console and strengthen the former should be the object of the religious minister; to prevent the terrors of the latter, we should say unto them, repent in time. And as the pious minister who speaks to the dying soul in the accents of hope is like unto an angel of light, so the gloomy enthusiast who aggravates his fears may be compared to a spirit of darkness.

Do we find on the other hand, that the want of all hope in futurity is compensated by the absence of all fear? In order to judge of this, we must consider those only who are positively irreligious, as in the former case we looked to none but such as were really pious. Some from native thoughtlessness of disposition, from stupidity, or from the constant pressure of occupation, scarcely ever think of futurity, and therefore these cannot help us to determine whether the prospect of annihilation, or of a future though uncertain state of being, be most agreeable to the mind. We must look then to those who really reflect and yet reject religion. Now I would

ask, do we find that such persons are more cheerful, and seem upon the whole to enjoy life more than religious characters? I believe that very few will hazard such an assertion. On the contrary, it has struck me that thinking men without religious faith are apt in the decline of life to become morose and melancholy, and if they have had misfortunes, to be consumed with bitterness of soul.

Besides the appeal here made to direct experience, we may remark that it is contrary to the general principles of human nature, to suppose that a great and certain evil in prospect like annihilation, can be preferable to an uncertain mixture of weal and woe. Man is a hopeful being, sometimes to a wonderful degree; and as in the coming events of this life he is wont to anticipate good rather than evil, so in a future existence he hopes that his lot will be cast among the happy.

Were the belief in a futurity totally unconnected with fear, it would not have the same good effects. Uncertainty and its consequence fear are grand promoters of desire, so that if we felt sure of happiness hereafter, we might long for it less; and if we had no dread of punishment, we might almost cease to wish for reward. And it is evident, that a futurity without the possibility of punishment, could not have the same salutary influence upon our conduct. In the majority of cases such would probably be the result; but in a few the effect might be different. Persons naturally indolent and desponding, or broken by misfortunes, might be induced quite to throw up their interest in the present world, and neglecting their affairs here,

to look only to their state hereafter. Instead of battling with difficulties and overcoming them, they might long for death as a relief from trouble, and the commencement of everlasting felicity. They might even be tempted to anticipate their natural end, like those disciples of Socrates to whom we have already alluded.<sup>15</sup> But when our condition in another life is supposed to depend upon our conduct in the present, the desire of immortality is cherished where salutary, and checked where it might be injurious.

Considering the immense importance of religion as a source of happiness in our present state, it seems to me impossible to assert, that on the whole there has been an excess of religious zeal ; nor does it seem probable that there will be an excess in future. The cares of this life, the necessity of providing for our daily wants, the numerous sources of amusement which

<sup>15</sup> The character of Hamlet as drawn by Shakespeare is of the kind here mentioned. He is represented as an exceedingly refined and accomplished person, full of noble thoughts and aspirations, fond of contemplation, but irresolute in action, and far too sensitive, desponding, and fastidious for struggling with the difficulties of life :—

“ The time is out of joint ; Oh, cursed spite  
That ever I was born to set it right !”

To such a character nothing can be more natural than the famous soliloquy—“ To be, or not to be.”

“ For who would bear the whips and scorns of time, &c.

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But that the dread of something after death,—  
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn  
No traveller returns,—puzzles the will ;  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,  
Than fly to others that we know not of ?”

every where present themselves, political struggles, even the pursuit of science, are all opposed to the predominance of religious feeling. Indeed, to judge from the complaints of divines in all times, it would seem that we have to apprehend a deficiency rather than an excess of piety. The world we live in presses so close upon us, we are too apt to forget that the temporal is as nothing compared with the eternal ; for any limited time bears no proportion to infinity. Assuredly there have been examples of excessive religious zeal, as of political fanaticism, and of every other passion run wild, and probably there will always be such ; but those excesses, like the extravagances of love or of liberty, only prove how interesting the subject is, how important an element of happiness ; and if we have been led to conclude that even the most dangerous of our desires, such as ambition and thirst for glory, produce much more good than ill, we shall not hesitate to determine that the general good effect of religion is but slightly affected by such exceptions, which, like all extreme cases, strike us much more than they deserve. The murder of Henry IV. of France has done incalculable ill to the cause, though it be but a single fact ; so much are the minds of men impressed by a solitary instance, if it happen among the great, and be universally known. On the other hand, the advantages of religion are appreciated by those who feel them or discover them by the eye of reason, but they cannot be so palpably displayed as the acts of cruelty to which it has occasionally led. And although, at times, a religious madness may have seized even a whole

community, yet the fit has soon passed by, and another age has seen the same excesses renewed in the name of civil liberty. The history of nations, like the life of an individual, is a history of the passions, and the decay of one would seem only the preparation for another. Thus the religious frenzy which in the middle ages gave birth to the Crusades, and strewn the East with bones, has, in modern times, been succeeded by a political fury which shook every throne in Christendom, and deluged Europe with blood. If we be to judge of the passions by their occasional excesses, we ought to condemn them all, but if by their general effects, we must pronounce them all to be necessary; and if we do not abjure liberty because it has engendered horrors, neither shall we traduce religion because it may have done the same. Their respective partizans endeavour to palliate the evils to which each may have led, and so far they may be allowed a quiet hearing; but when the one attacks the other, the latter has a right to retort; and if he can show that the same crimes are committed under the banner of the former, he, at least, ought to silence that adversary. Such is the blindness of party, that it excuses or lauds the same enormities in its own case, which it most condemns in another; and while attacking some form of intolerance, leaves the spirit alive. "That spirit still stalks abroad, while we are gibbeting the carcass, or demolishing the tomb."<sup>16</sup> Every producer is against restrictions on trade, except in his own case. If the

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<sup>16</sup> Burke.

friends of liberty exclaim against the religious murderers of the sixteenth century, the votaries of religion may point to the political assassins of the last and present age. Omitting these mutual recriminations, the parties ought to unite to keep down the real cause of the mischief, ungovernable passion in whatever form it may appear. And as Religion and Liberty are the choicest spirits which the Deity has given to man, so their revels are the most dangerous. Let us then fondly cherish and preserve them, even from their own excesses ; for, if he lose the one, man is a degraded being ; if he reject the other, he lives without Consolation, and dies without Hope.



## PART III.

ON CERTAIN GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF HAPPINESS.

### CHAPTER I.—ON OCCUPATION.

IN the course of the preceding inquiry into the nature and effects of the Passions, we have frequently had occasion to point out, in a cursory manner, particular applications of certain general principles which have a mighty influence upon human happiness. We must now examine these principles separately, and bring them more into notice. This will form the subject of the present division of our inquiry.

The first which I shall mention, is the grand Principle of Occupation. Let us see what this principle really is.

The slightest acquaintance with our mental constitution is sufficient to inform us that the mind of man, in his waking hours, cannot be altogether vacant, but must be taken up with something, whether sensation, thought, or emotion. It is equally evident that the capacity of the mind is limited, so that far from embracing many things at once, it cannot exist in more than one state at the same instant of time.

The immediate consequence of these first principles



is, that the more the mind is occupied with one thing, the less *can* it be occupied with another ; and conversely, the less it is occupied with one thing, the more *must* it be occupied with another.

Again, there is another principle to be taken along with the foregoing, though it seems independent of them ; that the longer the mind remains fixed in any one state, the greater difficulty does it find in changing to a different state. In other words, the more we indulge in any feeling or train of reflection, the greater hold does it take upon the mind. These together are what we call the principles of occupation, of immense importance to the metaphysician and moralist, for by them a very great variety of phenomena admit of a ready explanation, and on them the happiness of men depends in an eminent degree.

Several particular applications of the above principles have been already made ; but now we must take a general and connected view of their consequences.

Since we have seen that the mental phenomena consist either in sensations, thoughts, or emotions, it follows from the above principles that the more we live in any one of these states, the less can we live in another, that an excessive addiction to the senses tends to prevent the due development of reason, imagination, and affection, that reason itself may exclude depth of feeling, and sensibility impede the growth of the powers of reflection. No doubt, the difference between men is very considerable, in rapidity of conception, judgment, and feeling, as well as in the facility of passing from one state to another. Thus the mind of one man may embrace in suc-

cession a great variety of phenomena, and no one faculty or susceptibility perish from want of opportunity ; while another shall be so engrossed by his favourite subject as to find time for nothing else. Still, in every case it is true, that leisure is necessary to the growth of our faculties and susceptibilities, though from a natural quickness, time may go much further with some than with others. A few remarkable instances may be adduced of persons who have had many pursuits, and yet excelled in all, such as the admirable Crichton, Phenomenon Young, and the celebrated Duke of Buckingham, who

“ in the course of one revolving moon  
Was chemist, statesman, fiddler and buffoon ; ”

but the vast majority of mankind must neglect much if they mean to be superior in any thing. Here we see a rock on which men of ability not unfrequently split. Their pride will not allow them to appear ignorant upon any subject, and therefore they never reach that eminence in one branch which otherwise they might have attained.

How much sensations may occupy the capacity of the mind, appears evidently in the case of bodily suffering, which often renders men as incapable of intellectual exertion as of emotion of any kind, whether painful or pleasurable. A man labouring under an attack of *tic douloureux*, or a violent fit of the gout, can seldom follow any connected train of thought, or be touched with joy or grief like other people. Some, however, have more command over themselves than others, and can in a degree banish the pain from their

mind by dwelling upon something else, as for instance, Frederick the Great, who is said to have been able to read continuously, while his body was afflicted by the gout.<sup>1</sup> But such instances are, perhaps, as rare as the character of such a man. We cannot doubt that the pain was alleviated by this act of attention ; and so would uneasiness of any kind, for the mind would no longer be filled by it ; and hence we see that the grand, the only remedy for suffering, whether mental or bodily, is occupation. We cannot expel any thought or feeling directly, but we may indirectly, by substituting another in its room ; and this can only be done by sedulously clinging to something which has no connection with our grief. Therefore all attempts at condolence, however well intended, all philosophical reasonings and consolations, produce a bad effect ; for they serve to recall what we would wish for ever to forget.

A principal reason why people labouring under severe affliction avoid their friends and acquaintances, seems to be, that they dread attempts at consolation, by which the wound is kept constantly open. Were it not for these attempts, the presence of a friend would probably be agreeable ; one who would either not speak at all, or else upon any subject rather than the painful one. For the great object should be gradually to occupy the mind with something else. The opposite plan, however, is often adopted by those whose intentions are good, but whose knowledge of human nature is slight.

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<sup>1</sup> See Lord Dover's history of Frederick the Great, vol. ii.

“ Fell sorrow’s tooth doth never rankle more  
Than when it bites, but lanceth not the sore,”<sup>2</sup>

was the answer of Bolingbroke to those who were endeavouring to *console* him for his banishment.

With respect to the intellectual faculties, and the desires which direct and set them in motion, there can be no doubt that a man may be so absorbed by these, as to leave no time for cultivating the tender or devotional feelings of his nature. He may not be a bad man; on the contrary, he may perform all his moral duties with regularity, but he will not be very susceptible of piety, friendship, or love. At least, the more he is engaged with his main pursuit, the greater must be his natural susceptibility to tenderness, if still it live and flourish. For, with most men, affectionate feelings require to be fostered by education as much as the intellect or imagination, and as time is necessary for the improvement of the latter, so likewise of the former.

But be it observed, that the above remark applies not in any particular degree to pursuits purely intellectual, having knowledge for their object, but equally to those where the intellect is engaged in quest of wealth or power. Curiosity is surely not a more engrossing passion than covetousness or ambition, though it may lead to greater efforts of the understanding and to habits of abstraction. In this case, the intellect is more developed than in any ordinary profession, and so far there should be less room for the affections, were it not that the numerous

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<sup>2</sup> Richard II. Act i.

cares and anxieties which men of the world experience, as much engage the mind to the exclusion of the tender sentiments as the concentrated turn of the philosopher.

Divines are constantly complaining that men are too much addicted to the business and pleasures of the world ; but why are they too much addicted ? Have business and pleasure anything necessarily bad in them ? No ; but they occupy the mind and exclude the feelings of devotion.

Where ought we to expect the greatest development of the intellect or of the social affections ? Not among the very rich, because they are too much engaged in a routine of company and costly amusements ; not among the poor, for they are too much engrossed with the care of procuring a livelihood.

Why has one day in the week been wisely set aside for rest from labour and for religious exercises ? What good purpose is served by Saints' days or other festivals, and what is the object of all holy rites and ceremonies ? The object of all is the same ; to afford leisure from worldly pursuits, and to fill up that leisure with prayer and devout meditation. To Protestants, the numerous fasts and ceremonies of the Romish church appear senseless and contemptible, but they answer one great end, for they make religion an occupation. The zealous Catholic may be so much taken up with these as to require no other strong interest ; while the Protestant is left more to himself, for divine service once a week engages too little time and requires too little exertion to be really much of a pursuit. Hatred of Popery

was so strong in many of the early reformers, that they not only warred with the substance, but also smote at the shadow. Thus not content with asserting the grand principle of free inquiry, and upsetting the power of the priest, they also abolished many rites and ceremonies which might fill the head and warm the heart of the religious votary.

It is well known that a man in a violent passion is incapable of sound reasoning. This is quite simple, for where the mind is so filled with emotion, what place can there be for the intellect? So bewildered is he, that he is commonly said to be mad; and though this be an extreme case, a similar result must follow, though in a modified degree, when the passion is somewhat less. The use of passion is to render us decided, prompt, vigorous, and persevering in our undertakings, and also to prevent the mind from wandering, and so far it assists the understanding; but beyond a certain point it cannot fail to produce an opposite effect. This consequence of our present principle seems also confirmed by experience. The same may be said of the imagination and of sensibility, which, as we have seen, are absolutely necessary to give us ideas on certain subjects, and furnish materials for reason, though they may be so developed as to leave little scope for the intellect.<sup>3</sup>

It follows directly from the principles of occupation, that the more extended is the range of our affections, the less intense will be any one in particular, and

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<sup>3</sup> "La sensibilité," says Diderot, "est le caractère de la médiocrité de l'esprit."

*vice versâ*. Thus the greater the number of our friends, the less are we likely to feel towards each. So Gay,

“Friendship, like love, is but a name,  
Unless to one you stint the flame.”

Love, the strongest of all affections, is never felt but for one, though that one may change. The feeling is far too powerful to admit of a divided object, and is not only itself concentrated, but it tends to reduce all other affections to insignificance. The attachment of children to parents, of brothers, of friends, of kinsmen, may withstand many rude attacks, but sinks beneath the bolt of Cupid.

It is said by some one, that friendship, which, in the world is scarcely a sentiment, is a passion in the cloister. This seems very natural. In cloisters, the mind being occupied neither by business, amusement, family affection, nor love, there is ample scope for friendship. College is a sort of cloister, for there is neither domestic society nor society of women, and accordingly there, if anywhere, are real friendships formed. At a distance from home, from kindred, and acquaintance, the heart feels its loneliness, and therefore embraces with ardour a new and soft impression. Moreover, this impression is increased by the force of novelty, as well as by the reflection that the object is *our own choice*, whereas custom somewhat deadens our feelings towards those whom we have known from our infancy ; and they were friends without our will.

Cities may be favourable to refinement of manners, but they are adverse to the growth of strong affections, for while constant intercourse rubs down all

outward roughness, acquaintance with many precludes deep feeling for any one. Besides, the variety of amusements in a town tends to dissipate the mind, and prevent impressions from being so profound and permanent as in the quiet retirement of the country. No where are men and events so soon forgotten as in Paris, that most amusing of capitals.

When a family is numerous, a parent cannot be expected to feel so strongly for each of his children, as when he has fewer ; or, if he make a favourite of one, he will be apt to neglect the rest. In like manner a tribe of brothers and sisters can hardly be very affectionate. In the East, where polygamy prevails, and where a monarch or a very rich man may count his children by scores, he generally cares little for the mass of them, but selects one on whom he lavishes his kindness, while this one considers his brethren rather as rivals than friends, and if he have the power, cuts them off unmercifully.

This may serve to shew that the affection of parents to children, of brothers and sisters, is not a mere instinct, as has been often supposed. It arises in part from the consciousness of the near relation in which they stand to self, and so far we like our children as we do our own houses, lands, and trees ; in part, from early associations of pleasure. The helpless condition of an infant is a constant call upon the compassion of every one who surrounds it, and compassion is akin to love ; and the first smiles of the little innocent, its quiet prattle and awakening intelligence, are delightful and interesting to all who pay any attention to them. But the greater the number of children,



the less is the imagination of the parent struck with his relation to any one in particular, for what is shared with many seems no very close connection; and where there are several, he cannot attend to all. An Eastern monarch, perhaps hardly sees the greater part of his progeny, at least during their infancy, and consequently he feels nothing for them; so that if paternal affection be at all instinctive, it is here at least overcome. How much the love of parents towards their offspring depends upon association and occupation, is proved by the fact, that a nurse generally loves her charge as she would her own infant, and does it as much justice; while parents become almost indifferent to a child reared at a distance from home. It is also often seen that the more sickly the child the more it is doted upon, partly because it creates love through pity, partly because it is necessarily a greater object of attention. If there be any latent affection for another, occupation about the object is sure to draw it out. Children, on the other hand, sent away from home in their infancy, generally care little for their parents, as those born in India of English residents, and soon shipped off for Great Britain. Thus, without supposing any peculiar instinct, paternal love may be accounted for on these general principles; the universal liking which we have for whatever is related to self, general benevolence evinced in pity for a helpless object, association, and occupation. Children are so closely related to self, that they are fancied even to continue it, and therefore also they are loved, as flattering our desire of perpetuity.

The importance of a leading desire, and hence of

a leading pursuit, on which we have dwelt so much, is proved in two ways, first from direct experience, and secondly, from the principle of occupation. Since the mind of man must be engaged with something, it is of the utmost moment with what it be taken up, for if not filled with pleasurable thoughts and emotions, it is sure to be over-borne by painful. Now, our thoughts and emotions can have reference only to the Past, the Present, or the Future. Whatever the cause may be, the fact is certain, that the present can seldom entirely occupy us for any great length of time; so that, do what we may, we constantly find ourselves wandering to the future or to the past. The present is but a moment, while the past is comparatively extensive, and the future boundless. Therefore in one or the other of these must our principal employment be found. The past may be dwelt upon for itself, and may amuse by remembrance, but, as it is gone for ever, it is chiefly useful as affording lessons for the future. Besides, recollections generally give rise to some melancholy, for they recall joys for ever fled, and friends whom we can see no more. The impressions produced are, no doubt, of a mingled nature. Pleasure remembered is itself agreeable; but by comparison with our present altered state, it is converted into pain.

Nessun maggior dolore  
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice  
Nella miseria.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, pain recalled is disagreeable

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<sup>4</sup> Dante.

directly; but when compared with our present improved condition, it gives rise to pleasure. Reflection on years gone by is itself, however, of a melancholy nature, whether years of joy or of woe; for thus we are made aware that our earthly career is shortened, and that death is drawing near. So long as life goes on nearly in the same routine, we are scarcely sensible of the lapse of time, but when any sudden and remarkable change takes place, we instantly perceive that the past is really gone, and are afflicted accordingly. This painful feeling may arise, even though the event be itself of a joyful nature. A visit to a favoured spot which we have not seen for years generally causes some melancholy, though the place seem as beautiful as ever; and even a great and happy event, such as marriage, or some high advancement, brings a dash of pain along with it, for our life seems now cut in two, and the present and future irrevocably severed from the past. We bid adieu to it as a friend from whom we separate for ever. And if even a fortunate occurrence often bring some regret, how much more a calamitous! We cannot doubt that a part of the grief which we feel on the death of friends arises from its forcibly suggesting the lapse of time, and the certainty of our own dissolution. There is but one reflection which can mitigate this sorrow for the past,—reflection on works performed.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> How natural and how instructive is the speech of Arviragus to Belarius!

“What should we speak of  
When we are old as you? When we shall hear

Thus, the impressions of the past are necessarily of a mixed nature, but rather inclining to melancholy, while anticipations of the future may be more purely delightful. Moreover, as the past is limited and unchangeable, and so gives us nothing to do, it therefore less fills the mind, and being perfectly known to us, it leaves no scope for the imagination; whereas, the future is a boundless and undiscovered country to be improved by our own assiduity. Hence this is the grand, the permanent object of human thought and emotion. But emotion which looks forward must be either desire or fear, one or other of which can occupy the mind more than aught beside; and as the former prevails over the latter, so, in a great degree, will be the sum of our happiness.

Our experience of different characters confirms the above remarks, for are not the melancholy prone to look back, the gay and cheerful forward? This shows that the past has some connection with melancholy, the future with cheerfulness. The natural turn of mind inclines to these different views, and these views increasing the natural bent, they are dwelt upon accordingly.

The rain and wind beat dark December, how,  
In this our pinching cave, shall we discourse  
The freezing hours away? We have seen nothing."

So Guiderius:

"Haply this life is best,  
If quiet life be best; sweeter to you,  
That have a sharper known; well corresponding  
With your stiff age; but, unto us, it is  
A cell of ignorance."

*Cymbeline*, Act iii. Sc. 3.

From what has been said above, we may learn the hollowness of the Epicurean maxim, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die;" for the above principles inform us that man cannot expel pain but by means of some better occupation, that neither the present nor the past can occupy him fully and agreeably, and therefore that he cannot enjoy to the utmost what the time being really affords, unless he have something beyond on which desire may rest. In vain would philosophers attempt to dissuade men from thinking of the future, for in so doing they go contrary to human nature; but if they could succeed, ennui or other ills would fill up the vacant mind.

It would be easy to multiply instances of the above principles; but without entering more into detail, enough has probably been said to prove their comprehensiveness, and to enable the reader to apply them on fit occasions.

## CHAPTER II.

## ON ACTIVITY.

CLOSELY connected with the above principle is that of Activity. If a leading desire be necessary to occupy us fully and agreeably, so likewise is activity ; and moreover it is only by means of activity that a leading desire can agreeably fill the mind. Now, a strong desire generally produces activity, but not necessarily nor universally. He who has a stake in the lottery may eagerly desire a prize, but he can do nothing to obtain his object. The luckless traveller who is mounted on a lazy mule, endeavours at first to urge it to a quicker pace, but when the whip is of no avail, he must at last give up the contest, though he ardently wish to arrive at his journey's end. So, we may long for fine weather, but as we cannot change it, we remain inactive. A desire even of this sort may engage and amuse the mind not a little ; but, not leading to action, it is too apt to terminate in that uneasy restless state called impatience, in which our eagerness for the future renders us discontented with the present. Here the desire, having no vent, feeds upon the mind too much, but when it gives birth to action, the ultimate object is occasionally lost sight of in the hurry and bustle of the pursuit. The former emotion may be compared to a fire of charcoal that corrupts the air, the other to the cheerful blaze which renews and purifies the atmosphere.

As there are two kinds of desire, the active and the inactive, so are there two kinds of Hope. Having already analysed this state of mind, and in part shown how it acts as an element of human happiness, it only remains to observe that much of the effect commonly attributed to hope, is in reality due to the activity which it sets in motion. Hope alone is seldom sufficient agreeably to fill the mind, and when too long deferred, as Solomon saith, “ It maketh the heart sick ;” but when it gives rise to activity, it then is truly delightful. Activity, within certain bounds, is not only agreeable in itself, but is necessary to give a zest to all other enjoyments ; while the languor which attends its absence is not merely itself unpleasant, but deadens the relish of every passing amusement.

That activity is a real source of enjoyment is evident from the fact that the more active is any pursuit, the longer does it please ; and that too, whether the end be great or small, frivolous or important. Objects the most insignificant may be followed up from year to year with unabated ardour, provided the chase be one of movement and difficulty. What proportion between the toil and danger of a fox-hunt and the petty prey in view ? Here, it is evident, the pursuit is almost every thing, and it must be very agreeable, or it would not be undertaken for so very trifling an object. A steeple-chase is a still more remarkable instance, for here there appears hardly to be an object at all. The same observation applies to most kinds of sport. And be it remarked that in spite of the frivolity of the end, these pursuits often please to

the last, and are discontinued only when the bodily powers are insufficient for such exertions. The old sportsman who can no longer follow the game on foot, is still carried to the field on a quiet pony, and dismounts only to fire.

The above remark holds true of mental as well as of bodily activity. The more abstruse is any branch of inquiry, the longer does it interest; as is seen in mathematics, metaphysics, and the learned languages, which may please during the whole of life. Nor even here is the importance of the object by any means essential. How frivolous many of the questions of the schoolmen! how minute the disquisitions of many studious grammarians! but entity and quiddity, Hebrew roots and Greek particles, have been enough to fill up existence. Such, indeed, is the natural respect for activity, that it can give dignity to a pursuit, while the end has really none; for though a fox-hunter or a verbal critic may not be a very useful personage, he is always more thought of than the indolent or the idle. In countries where hunting, shooting, and fishing, are the common amusements of the gentry, it rather goes against a man that he is no sportsman, for he is thought to be wanting in energy.

Amusements, on the other hand, comprising little activity, where we are more spectators than doers, speedily pall upon the mind. Such are shows and sights of all kinds, plays, operas, pantomimes, ballets, processions, sauntering, slow driving, and novel-reading. Not so with cards and other games of skill or hazard, which continue to interest to the latest



period of life, either, like chess and whist, from the degree of thought they require, or from the rapid succession of hopes and fears, which depend on the uncertainty of gain or loss.

“ And cards and counters are the toys of age,”

for they keep alive activity of mind, but require no bodily exertion. Were a man really at a loss for something to occupy and interest him, I would advise him to study chess, for by this he might expel ennui as well as by a more useful employment.

Certain though it be that activity is preferable to inactivity, a life of exertion to one of total repose, yet as the first step towards it is always an effort, men are for ever in danger of falling into indolent habits. To counteract this tendency, nature has not only given to man desires towards various objects, such as wealth, fame, power, &c., but has also attached a pain to inactivity, often more intolerable than the most laborious exertions. As some have much stronger desires than others, while none are totally free from them, so the feeling of languor, from the want of something to do, varies much in intensity, though common to the whole human race, from childhood even to age. This is consequently an universal goad, urging us to perform something, whether good or ill. By long habit it may indeed be blunted ; but woe to him who has thus succeeded, for having lost this stimulus, his case is truly hopeless. Some indolent pleasures may still flit across his mind, but to the full thrill of life and vigour, he must for ever bid adieu.

It would seem that pain is the original cause of all exertion. Do away with this stimulus, and you reduce mankind to the most degraded state. This is a reason why the inhabitants of sunny climes are often so far behind the natives of colder regions in every species of improvement, moral, intellectual, and economical. They have too few wants, or these are too easily satisfied, to admit of strenuous exertion. For we seldom pursue any thing ardently until we feel the want thereof. Now what we call a *want*, is a feeling of pain combined with a desire for its relief. Thus hunger is a want, and but for it we never should have thought of eating, or of making endeavours to procure food. After we come to know various sorts of food, and their effects upon our frame, we may long for them on account of their pleasing taste, or in order to support our body; but in the first instance, sustenance is sought for merely to drive away pain. So we must feel an uneasiness in the absence of mental or bodily exercise, or of amusement, before we are led to bestir ourselves, though after we have begun to move, unlooked for pleasures present themselves, and new desires arise. Hence we may conclude that pain is the *primum mobile* of the human race.

We may distinguish three sorts of uneasiness springing out of the mind itself, nearly connected, and yet not quite the same; one or other of which, rather than the prospect of things external, seems to be the principal incentive to great mental exertion; at least, in the commencement. These are the pain of mental stagnation, the pain of conscious ignorance, and the uneasiness which arises from reflecting on time and

faculties thrown away. Some minds seem to be peculiarly sensitive on this last score, and such would rather fail in any noble undertaking, than never make the attempt. In the former case their pride may be wounded, but they escape the bitter reflection, that but for indolence or despondency they might have done something great. Here is the undying worm that feeds upon the human heart. Though no one can insure success, all may aim at it; and if we fail from want of talents, we may be humbled, but cannot feel self-reproach.

It is now time to inquire what is the real nature of that activity which is so important as an element of human happiness.

Activity, as we have seen, always commences with a desire, but it does not stop there. The original desire first occupies the mind with the object, and causes it to turn in all directions in search of *means* whereby that object may be attained. Thus, thought is roused, and as soon as reflection has pointed out the means, these instantly become the object of another and secondary desire; and if other means be still necessary, these in their turn create desire, and so on through a long chain of reasonings and emotions, until we reach the principal end. Thus it appears at the outset that activity consists in a succession of desires and thoughts.

But if this train were to proceed slowly, the mind would either be wearied by uniformity of thought, or become languid from vacuity; and hence we see that rapidity of succession is essential to activity. So far, the principle of activity differs not from that

of change, and therefore it would seem to be comprehended under the latter, and might be defined as a rapid change of thought and feeling. But this is not all. A man sitting in his easy chair after dinner, may have many schemes and desires idly flitting through his brain in rapid course, but not forming one connected chain; and though he be amused by this variety, he cannot be said to be active. It is necessary for this purpose that the thought spring from the desire, as an effect from its cause. Therefore mental activity may be defined to consist in *a rapid succession of desires, and thoughts the result of those desires, all proceeding from one original desire.*

But what shall we say of bodily activity? here, as before, there must be a primary desire to set us in motion, and as, ere the destined object be attained, many previous steps must be taken, each of these in its turn must be the object of a secondary desire. We are bent upon reaching some particular spot, and therefore we *will* the motion of our limbs in order to arrive there, and however slight and transitory each separate feeling may be, still without a particular desire, no one step can be taken. We have here then a long succession of desires, called in this case volitions, and consequent to them a corresponding series of bodily movements. These bodily movements are insignificant in themselves, and did they not affect our minds, they could not even be known to us, nor give us either pain or pleasure. It is only through our sensations that they are to us of any importance. Each motion of our limbs is followed by a change in the mind, and as this is the immediate consequence

of a change in the state of our body, it is truly and properly a sensation. Therefore in bodily activity the mental series of phenomena consists in desires and sensations, the latter being the result of the former through the intervention of our material structure. Consequently, the whole of the pleasure derived from activity of body, depends upon *a rapid succession of desires, and sensations the result of those desires; all proceeding from one original desire.*

There is something very mysterious in the operation of desire upon thought. It is certain that we can directly will neither the presence nor the absence of any idea; for, to will any idea, we must know what it is, and if so, it is already present, and therefore cannot be an object of desire; and to wish for its absence supposes it to be still there. Nevertheless, desire has a mighty influence upon our thoughts, by fixing the mind and preventing it from wandering to other subjects than the one we wish to investigate; for if we dwell long upon any point, a long train of connected ideas will not fail to arise, till we reach discoveries which we never could have anticipated. Thus it is that desire is the stimulus and guide of reflection. The above consideration may help us to discover what is the real difference between desire and will. This oft debated question does not fall within the range of our present inquiry, but as we have come upon it unawares, I shall state as briefly as possible my ideas upon the subject. When are we said to *will* any thing? Then and then only when we know for a certainty beforehand that we can perform what we wish. Thus, we will

the motion of our limbs because we are assured that they will move at our pleasure, but we only desire a change in our thoughts and feelings, because we cannot be certain that such a change will ensue. We may turn to other pursuits, we may take up a book, or go out to walk, but we do not feel confident of success in expelling the ideas that haunt us. Nay, the very wish to expel them often has a contrary effect, for it serves to suggest what otherwise might have been forgotten; and the stronger the wish the more does it tend to recall. So, the desire to remember any thing, say a name, does not always enable us to do so; nay, a very strong desire often prevents us from remembering; while the thing may recur at a moment when we were conscious of no effort. Therefore it would appear that Volition is *desire combined with the undoubted belief that the object is in our power, and terminating in an outward action*. Thus the Will operates directly only on the body, though by means of outward movements we may hope to change the current of our thoughts and emotions, and frequently do succeed.

Rapid change, independent of our desires or volitions, is itself a cause of pleasure; but, other things being equal, the more the change originates in self, the greater is the excitement. Quick carriage travelling is certainly very agreeable; but the enjoyment is much enhanced if we hold the reins ourselves, and onward urge the steeds. For the same reason, quick riding is more animating than being driven, or even than quick driving; for, in the former case, the horse and its movements seem more intimately connected

with self. Whilst we are carried on horseback at a rapid pace, we almost fancy ourselves a part of the animal, and his movements our own. It is our will that urges him, and the close contiguity and simultaneous motion serve to keep up the delusion that we are the chief actors. But were it possible to run on foot, without great fatigue, as fast as we can ride, I doubt not the pleasure would be still greater. This is probably one of the chief enjoyments of birds, especially of swallows and others, which can take great flights without exhaustion. Who can doubt, that the lark, as he wings his upward course, feels a thrill of delight?

“ Hail to thee, blithe Spirit,

The blue deep thou wingest,  
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.”

At all events, walking is in general a far more lively exercise than riding at a walking pace, and beyond all comparison more so than being driven at the same rate. Here the rapidity is the same; but as in one case it depends entirely upon ourselves, in the others not, the feeling produced is very different. Travelling by water is in general far less animating than by land. This is owing, in part no doubt, to the much less variety of objects which water presents, for nothing can well be more monotonous than a wide expanse of sea and sky. But the fact seems also to depend in part upon the above principles. On board a boat we feel much less active than in a carriage going at the same rate, for though we do not drive we still may see the horses, and these being moving animals, we actually

catch from them by sympathy some feeling of exertion. And this is confirmed by the reflection, that when we cannot see the horses we are more inclined to ennui than when we can. No doubt, this is partly owing to the different view of the country, but not entirely. Even when we cannot see the horses, the knowledge that they are there has somewhat of the same effect; whereas we can have no sympathy with the powers of steam and wind. Besides, we are by no means so conscious of our motion by water as by land, and we may be going very fast without being at all aware of it, partly from the want of contiguous objects whereby to measure our progress, partly from the very smooth and regular nature of the movement. Even when there are contiguous objects, the latter cause prevents us from being fully sensible of our locomotion, as in the well known case of sailing along a shore, when the shore seems to recede rather than we to advance. Whatever may be the rapidity of motion, if it be perfectly uniform and without a standard of comparison, it becomes completely insensible, as that of the globe which we inhabit. This phenomenon may be observed on a small scale, when water is drawn out of a barrel. When the bung is taken out, and the water allowed to flow into a bucket, if the fluid be very clear and the motion quite regular, it appears like a curved rod of solid glass. In Paris, which is supplied with water by means of carts, this phenomenon may be seen daily, and it really has a very curious appearance.

The rapidity of steam travelling, great as it is, is not enough to render it exciting, whether by land or



water. Besides the disagreeable heat, smoke, smell, and sparks, which may be somewhat remedied, there are two circumstances essentially connected with this mode of conveyance that must for ever prevent it from greatly rousing the mind. First, it is exceedingly uniform ; and secondly, it precludes the possibility of our fancying that we have aught to do. Carried along in a steamer, or in the train of a locomotive, we are like passive instruments in the hands of a superior power.

These examples may suffice to prove the accuracy of the analysis above given of activity, and to show that the pleasure connected with it varies as these two elements :

1. The rapidity of the change.
2. The greater or less dependance upon ourselves ; that is, upon our desires or volitions.

## CHAPTER III.

ON CHANGE OR VARIETY, NOVELTY, CONTRAST,  
AND PRIVATION.

THE above chapter leads us on to consider the great principle of Change or Variety. This is one of the most comprehensive principles in nature, for its influence pervades the whole world of spirit, as well as that of matter, whether organized or unorganized. Without change, the air we breathe, and the waters which we drink, would soon become corrupt and noxious, engendering maladies destructive to animal life ; and without the tempests which rouse the face of the deep, the ocean itself, now so conducive to health, would soon become a stagnant pool, spreading pestilence afar. Deprived of movement, our lakes and rivers would sleep in dismal swamps, and if any plants or animals should still survive, nothing but reeds and reptiles could spring from such pollution. If we ceased to move our limbs we should at last lose all power over them, and our frame would be a prey to disease ; and did we not exercise our minds in various ways, our faculties would be impaired or lost. In a word, change is necessary to maintain the purity of the material universe, and health both of mind and body.

Men in general seem aware of the great importance of this principle, for they appeal to it on all occasions. Is your health out of order ? you are recommended to

try change of air ; are your spirits depressed ? you are advised to try change of scene. In short, it is an universal panacea, when nothing more definite can be hit upon.

But the effects of change upon our sensibilities are here to be particularly noticed ; and these will best be understood when we know the effects of uniformity. Uniformity is opposed to change in its nature and in its consequences. When the same objects have been presented to the senses, or the same ideas of any kind have been suggested for a long time without interruption, one or other of two effects seldom fails to ensue. Either we pay less and less attention to what is going on around us, till at last we become quite insensible on that score, and no more perceive what is present than if we were far away ; or else we fall a victim to a painful feeling of a peculiar nature. This feeling is more allied to ennui than to any other of which we are conscious ; but the two are not identical. The one arises from vacuity, the other from constant repetition of the same thing ; and though both be disagreeable, still the uneasiness is different. Should a traveller be obliged to pass a rainy day in a remote country inn, he may be devoured with ennui, and on hearing a strolling minstrel he will at first listen gladly to his strain ; but if the same air be repeated again and again, he will fly from this second annoyance, though it be to meet the first. The fatigue of mind which results from repetition, may be compared to the fatigue of body which follows on the long continuance of the same muscular movements, and neither

the one nor the other is at all a proof of vacuity. On the contrary, bodily fatigue arises from too great exertion, and leaves the mind in a state very different from ennui; and mental fatigue is felt when we have been completely engaged by any subject, and have been so absorbed that we cannot expel it from our thoughts. It is the sameness alone that tires us, for if we can change the subject the mind becomes invigorated and ready for enjoyment, whereas, from an attack of ennui, the spirits recover but slowly. The remedy for the one is variety, for the other, occupation.

If we escape the feeling of fatigue arising from excessive sameness, it is only by becoming insensible to the objects which press upon us, and allowing our thoughts to wander to other and more interesting topics. In this state, the same words may be uttered, and the same vibrations fall upon the ear, the same colours may be present, and the same rays strike the eye, but they cease to make any impression, whether of pain or pleasure. So far as they are concerned the mind is without feeling, and no more cares for what is around than the dead who slumber in their sepulchres.

Such being the general effects of uniformity, it follows that a life of great monotony must have a strong tendency either to fatigue the mind, or else to blunt sensibilities of every sort. The first effect is unquestionably bad, and so, one would think, is the second, were it not that some persons are constantly at war with strong feeling. It is certain that deep sensibility exposes to pains more acute, as well as pleasures more lively, and therefore it may be main-

tained that the one counterbalances the other. But this argument pushed to its legitimate conclusion would prove that it were as well not to feel at all, or better, if our pains be supposed to outweigh our pleasures, and consequently that life is an evil. If this conclusion be denied, where are we to fix the limits, and say, so far sensibility is good, but it must not go beyond ?

Were we even to allow that here, as in other things, there is a certain medium which cannot be passed with advantage, yet as no one can point out exactly where it lies, we would wish to know which is the better extreme. Ought we to endeavour to deaden or keep alive our sensibilities ? The simple statement of the case seems enough to settle the question, for would we quit the noble nature of man for that of brutes, or rather of stocks and stones ?

Excess in any good is in general better than a deficiency, because more easily remedied ; and we can better restrain any too strong propensity than instil it where wanting. There is more hope of the youth who shows some intemperate ardour, than of him who is eager for nothing ; and even the orgies of liberty are more promising than the stillness of despotism. Too fiery a steed is more valued than one that is lazy. In like manner, too strong sensibilities are preferable to the opposite extreme, for we can cure the one more readily than the other. Take the case of Humanity and the feelings which enter into Conscience. Is it better to feel too deeply for our fellow-creatures or too little ; to have a conscience over sensitive or dull ? Had these feelings

never been deficient, the history of the world would not have been a history of crime. So long as they are lively, guilt cannot go far ; but when the heart is hardened and the conscience seared, where shall we look for a check ? If we turn to desire of reputation, this would not long survive the decay of the above feelings, for if we felt not self-condemned, we should care little for the disapprobation of others ; and then even the Law would lose great part of its terrors. Freed from dread of shame, we might indeed fear bodily pain, and loss of life, of freedom, or of fortune, though it is evident that in these cases also we can be acted upon only through our feelings ; and were we reckless of all things, we should be utterly ungovernable.

Though a temperament of acute sensibility suffers a greater feeling of pain as well as of pleasure, yet upon the whole, nothing appears less desirable than the joyless life of those who scarcely feel at all. Religion and philosophy can do much for the cure of all ills, and the ills themselves not unfrequently have some compensation. Even in deep grief, there is often a melancholy pleasure, a luxury peculiar to woe. Men frequently cling to their grief as they do to a beloved object, and avoid all scenes of amusement which might serve to drive it from their thoughts. Remorse is perhaps the only wound which has no balm.<sup>1</sup> Who are they whose lives appear the least enviable ? not such as have had sorrows deeply felt, but those who seem to have no interest in existence, and who have

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<sup>1</sup> See note B.

lost all relish for enjoyment. Without a pursuit, or without a facility for amusement, life becomes a tiresome repetition of indifferent acts. We sometimes meet with persons willing to confess that they have no enjoyments but eating and sleeping; if this last can be called one. Unmarried people in easy circumstances, are the most apt as they advance in years to lapse into this joyless state, without cares, but without delights; for they have no necessity for exertion, and no object for their affections. If they possess a taste for the pleasures of the imagination and the intellect, still more if they have cultivated piety betimes, they can fill up life with joy and dignity; otherwise cards, the table, and the bottle will be their sole resource.

Something of the same sort may be said of those who are constantly toiling at some business which requires no mental exertion, and admits of no variety. Custom wears off what at first was disagreeable, and then they go on in a routine which is mostly devoid either of pain or pleasure, but proceeds with the regularity of clock-work, and almost without feeling of any kind. Still, this occupation becomes in time necessary, for no sooner is it interrupted, than a want of employment is felt, and the man is roused from a state of indifference to one of positive suffering. If he have a wife and children, his sensibilities become so blunted by this uniform life, that he derives but little pleasure from their intercourse.

And here I may remark, that among all the rocks on which affection can split, the one chiefly to be avoided is uniformity. Its deadening influence is probably

to be feared even more than long absence, or other powerful causes : whereas change is not only animating in itself, but it increases our feeling for objects in themselves familiar. The influence of change is often quite magical, for it has been seen to convert the dullest being into a new creature, full of warmth and energy. Variety being so pleasing, whoever has partaken of it along with us becomes agreeable by association, and hence the companions of our travels and adventures of all kinds are looked upon with peculiar favour. Affections are lulled asleep by the quiet monotony of home, but they awake amid the vicissitudes of travel ; like a fire that smoulders in repose, but when stirred, bursts into flame.

Since variety is the great enlivener, it prolongs and renews our youth, whereas uninterrupted uniformity brings on premature age. Who would not sigh “ o’er feeling’s dull decay,” and wish to recall the time when

“ meadow, grove, and stream,  
The earth and every pleasant thing to us did seem  
Apparel’d in celestial light !  
The glory and the freshness of a dream !”<sup>3</sup>

and how shall we succeed in our wish except by means of variety. But variety not only renews our youth, but it *seems* to prolong our existence. Time, like space, cannot be accurately measured without the aid of intervening and prominent objects, on which the eye or mind may rest ; and when these are wanting, the distance seems always less. Thus distance by

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<sup>3</sup> Wordsworth.



water always appears less than by land, and an object seen over a flat and open country seems nearer than if the district were variegated by hill and wood. The effect is still more remarkable when the space between is quite lost to the eye, as by means of a deep hollow, or a projecting crag, which conceals an extent of ground. Thus, a mountain top, descried from the bottom of a valley, always appears less elevated than when viewed from the opposite hills; for in the former case, the space between the base and summit is seen but imperfectly. So it is with Time. When we look back upon the whole of our past life, or upon any part of it, the time appears long or short according to the force and variety of the impressions which we have experienced; and when there is nothing to mark a period, it is reduced to a point. Thus in sleep without dreaming, the moment we awake appears to follow immediately that of our falling asleep, and were it not for clocks and other outward indications, we could have no idea of the time elapsed. Our own mind tells us nothing. This is an extreme case, but the same holds true in a less degree in other instances, as in sleep interrupted and dreamy, and even in our waking hours when passed in an uniform manner. And be it remarked, that force alone, without variety, does not well mark the time; for a man absorbed by some one passion or keen pursuit allows hours to pass by unnoticed, and on looking back, he is astonished how short they appear. Those whose lives are spent in an exceedingly uniform manner, and who have not by nature more than ordinary sensibility, soon come to confound not only days or

months, but even years; for to them they are all alike: and therefore, when past, they seem to have fled as a vision. Such a life is in truth but one long day.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, a life or period of vicissitude appears on the retrospect extremely long, on account of the variety of impressions. Thus a month spent in travelling over a new and interesting country is as an age, and the first weeks we ever spend in any place always seem the longest. So it is with the whole of our career. Judging by the multitude of their recollections, some seem to themselves to have lived more at thirty than others at forty or fifty; and if we count existence not by the duration of mere animal life, but by the length of time during which we have really felt, the former might be said to be the older. The dormouse may live longer than many other animals, but as half its time is passed in sleep, its sensitive existence may be shorter; and so it is with one man who dozes away his hours while another is wide awake. That bright ornament of her sex and of human nature, M<sup>me</sup>. Roland, informs us in her memoirs, that, owing to sensibilities naturally comprehensive and lively, she had always found an interest in existence even amid the rudest shocks, and had filled her years with such a variety of impressions, that, estimating life by feeling, although under forty, *she had lived prodigiously*.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This very expression I once heard from a person in Paris, whose business condemned her to an exceedingly monotonous life. "Ma vie," said she mournfully, "n'est qu'un long jour."

<sup>5</sup> See note C.

From the above we may perceive the opposite effects of past and present variety. Present variety, serving to rouse our feelings, renews our mental youth; while past variety, by lengthening our days, gives us the notion of age; for when we have done and felt a great deal we fancy ourselves to be old. But this fancy is of little consequence, provided it do not affect our present sensibilities, and make us feel as well as think ourselves aged. And even if it should do so to a small extent, the pleasure we experience from variety when present, and from recollections of the varied and busy past, would reduce comparatively to nothing this really trifling inconvenience.

But change itself, pushed beyond a certain point, produces contrary effects, and may become as fatiguing as uniformity. The constant call upon our attention becomes in the end painful, so that at last we attend to nothing. Thus, travelling over a new and interesting country is most animating; but if the towns be numerous, and many objects to visit in each, we at last become fatigued, and on arriving at any place are rejoiced to be told that there is nothing to see. Nearly for the same reason a sublime spectacle tires us much sooner than a pretty one. We feel called upon to look and admire, and the attention required for this becoming painful, we are glad not to look any longer. And the more we are prompted by others to admire, the less are we inclined to do so; for in this case we seem to be under restraint, and feel rebellious accordingly. We are told that we *ought* to admire, and therefore we do not. But this is an instance of the principle of Liberty.

To return to that of Change, we see that after long wandering and variety, people are glad of repose, and even of monotony. No doubt, it may be said, that here an uniform life is itself a change. Accordingly, these persons generally soon tire of uniformity, and betake themselves to wandering again. The difficulty which men experience in weaning themselves from this sort of life, in spite of the unavoidable exertions, in spite of annoyances, and even dangers, is a proof how congenial it is to human nature. Nothing can well be conceived more perilous than travelling in Africa ; but scarcely any one ever went there on a journey of discovery who did not wish to return. Thus Park, Clapperton, Lander, and many others, who escaped on a first occasion, went back and perished miserably. The greatest triumph of civilization is the having withdrawn men from a varied and wandering life, and induced them quietly to settle, and the victory is not complete, for in every country some are still found who prefer the privations of wandering to all the comforts of monotony. A gipsy propensity still clings to the heart of man.

Another reason why change may at last become tiresome is, that as we see more and more, less remains to be seen that is new. Thus there will be change without novelty.

The human heart is made up of opposing principles ; so that if love of variety, love of liberty in all our thoughts and actions, and lastly love of independence be inherent in our nature, there is also another principle directly opposed to these, and which I beg leave to call the *Principle of the Anchor*. By

this I mean the tendency to seek for something fixed or settled in life. This principle and those before mentioned are constantly at war, and are relatively of different force in different individuals, and in the same individual at different periods of life ; the one generally gaining and the others losing strength the more we advance in years, so that in the end, the principle of the Anchor commonly gains the day. Thus we see that those who with respect to the sex were always seeking for variety, at last settle down with one, and in spite of their aversion to dependance and restraint, cling to wife, to children, and submit to ties which circumscribe their liberty. So, those most given to wandering generally look forward to some home where they may finally rest. Through the voyage of life we often look out for the port. The tendency which men have to marriage and to a fixed profession, are the most striking instances of the above principle ; for these may well be called the Anchors of Life. The choice of a wife and the choice of a profession depend upon individual taste ; but desire of settling is perpetually urging us to select some one or other.

2. Though to multiply particular instances of the great principle of variety would be an unnecessary and endless task, yet it may not be amiss to bring forward a few of the most remarkable. Let us take the case of professions. It must at first appear singular, but it is nevertheless true, that some of those professions which are most palpably disagreeable create, when followed up, the most enthusiasm. The reason appears to be that such professions offer more

variety, and consequently more excitement than others, so that when once the evils are got over, or, at least are deadened by custom, the usual effect of variety is felt. The two most striking instances in point, are the sea and physic. To a dispassionate observer, these professions appear pregnant with every thing odious and disgusting. To be cooped up in a ship, to be subjected to the most galling slavery, to be constantly exposed to danger in various forms, to feed upon salt beef<sup>6</sup> and biscuit, to be totally cut off from the society of women, presents such a picture of wretchedness, that one is at a loss to conceive how any can choose such a profession. The same may be said of physic. What more depressing, what more disgusting, than this profession in the eyes of a cool spectator ! Some, nay all, must expect occasionally to witness scenes which lower, horrify, or revolt ; but a medical man in the exercise of his calling sees nothing else. Misery in all its forms, every thing most disagreeable to the senses and most harrowing to the feelings must be for ever before him. What then can render sailors, physicians, and surgeons, so enthusiastic in their special pursuits ? Nothing but the variety and vicissitude which attend them. The life of a sailor is one of perpetual change and the most animating contrasts. There is a wildness about it which captivates the imagination far more than any regulated pursuit :

“ Ours the wild life in tumult still to range,  
From toil to rest, and joy in every change.”

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<sup>6</sup> *Mahogany*, as sailors call it, on account of its hardness.

Hence boys are so much taken with it ; for many who have changed afterwards, felt a first love for the sea.

Though the profession of physic has not the vicissitudes of the sea, it still offers a great variety of interest. Of all the numerous cases which come under the notice of a medical practitioner, no two are exactly alike. He has also the opportunity of witnessing a great variety of moral character. Since every day brings its change in the bodily or mental state of the patient, there is always something new to be observed, as well as something new to be done. What a field for interest is this !

It would be tedious to take a survey of all the professions, but I believe we shall find upon examination, that the degree of enthusiasm which they excite depends not upon the degree in which they are free from annoyances, but upon the variety and excitement which attend them respectively. Soldiers are, I think, less wrapt up in their calling than sailors, and lawyers than physicians. No profession seems to offer less variety and excitement than that of a lecturer in an university, and a clergyman, especially of an established church, and in a country situation. For there is a great difference in this respect between country and town. In town, where good preaching is known and highly appreciated, and where many clergymen of the same persuasion are assembled, there will naturally be some emulation ; whereas in the country, where the unchanging audience is chiefly composed of rustics, and where the minister has no rivals or competitors for fame, there is neither stimulus

nor variety. Accordingly, country clergymen are but too apt to fall into a state of indolence. It is well known that those of the church of England are not always very attentive to the daily parochial duties of visiting, exhorting, and consoling; and if the Scottish clergy leave less to desire in this respect, still we must allow that mental activity is not their usual characteristic. Unquestionably there are bright exceptions. A man naturally enthusiastic, as well as deeply impressed with the importance of religion and his ministerial duties, may, no doubt, make an interest to himself, of no ordinary intensity, in a very unpromising situation, among a few ignorant parishioners; but he *creates* the interest for himself, out of his own ardent mind, rather than finds it ready made. Such instances must therefore be rare. Put him in any situation, and such a man will find scope for activity; but out of the mass of clergymen belonging to the established churches of England and Scotland, how few are really enthusiastic! The church has the fewest annoyances or hardships, but it has also the least variety and excitement; and in a country situation, both the annoyances on the one hand, and the excitements on the other, are reduced to the lowest possible degree. Life is passed in an easy unvaried routine.

The case of a professorship in an university is somewhat similar to that of the church. When once the lectures are composed, and the first novelty is over, the duties often become a mere routine; possessing, perhaps, less of variety than any other learned occupation. That which is gone through one year, must



be gone through the next, and so on for ever. What variety there may be, is of the least agreeable kind. In a country parish, some interest in his flock is likely to be felt by the clergyman who has long been among them ; but the interest of a professor in his pupils is perpetually broken by the succession of new faces from year to year. On the other hand, his occupation is remarkably free from annoyance or hardship, and like the clergyman, he enjoys the satisfaction of holding forth without interruption, and being listened to probably with respect.

As we might suppose from what has been above said, are not professors very apt to slumber in their chairs? certainly, enthusiasm is not their general characteristic.<sup>7</sup>

If the opinion of Bacon be correct, that occasional excess, of course within certain limits, is better both for body and mind than perpetual moderation, what, we may ask, is the essential circumstance connected with excess, which can be supposed to render it salutary? Excess, it is clear, is a change, a great change, and therefore its effects may be classed under that principle. We know that a complete change of diet can have a most powerful influence upon the frame, whether for good or ill, according as it is employed ; and that a few glasses of wine, to one not used to it, can alter the whole color of the mind, and even the

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<sup>7</sup> It was probably with a view to avoid the routine into which old professors are apt to fall, that, according to the will of the founder, the chair of political economy at Oxford can be held but for five years.

force of body, giving strength to the weak, courage to the timid, and hope to the desponding.

But not only is it good to change our food from time to time, but it is safer to partake of a variety of dishes at the same meal, than to eat voraciously of one. The reason why it is a good rule to dine upon one or two things, is that thus temperance is secured, for we soon get tired of an only dish ; whereas both the palate is tickled and the digestion facilitated by variety, and therefore we devour twice as much. When we hear of people falling victims to indigestion, it is generally from excess in one favourite sort of food, as our Henry I., who died of eating lampreys.

How refreshing is solitude after the bustle of company ! and how enlivening is society after a long solitude ! and why ? each is a great change. Solitude and society each in its turn is essential to health of mind. Without the one we become thoughtless and frivolous, and are either fatigued by a constant bustle, or fall into ennui from the want of a regular pursuit ;<sup>8</sup> without the other, we are wont to lapse into melancholy.<sup>9</sup> Miss Martineau objects to the mode of life in America, that every thing is done in public, for as she judiciously observes, no one who does not spend some hours of the day alone, makes the best possible use of his existence. It is the misfortune of kings and other very great people that

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<sup>8</sup> “ Dans le monde, depuis qu’il est monde, on se plaint qu’on s’ennuie.”—*Massillon*.

<sup>9</sup> “ Be not solitary, be not idle.”—*Burton’s Anatomy of Melancholy, concluding words*.

they are seldom left to themselves, to reap the delight and benefit of silent contemplation.

People may dispute for ever on the respective advantages and disadvantages of a town or a country life, but this is pretty certain, that nothing is so desirable as a change from the one to the other. After being immured in a great city during the dreary months of winter, the sight of nature clad in her summer garb is perfectly enchanting; but when we live always in the country, we become used to it by degrees, and the change is too slow to strike. In like manner, when roads are wet, and days are dark and cold, the change to the bustle of town is animating in the extreme; but had we passed our summer in the city, we should not thus feel. Country and city have each peculiar interests, but in order to enjoy them to the full, we must take to them alternately.

As affording easy recreation a city has peculiar advantages, and therefore it is well adapted for studious and literary men. The amusements of the country are such as require bodily activity, often in a great degree, and to this literary men are commonly but little addicted, and it requires more time than they can spare. Hunting, shooting, long rides and walks, are rather incompatible with study, and without these there is nothing. In a large city, on the contrary, such as London or Paris, the mind can be amused by means of the moving scene without great bodily activity, and with little waste of time. This moving scene is precisely what is wanted in the country, and which we can replace only by more

strenuous exercise. The object of both is the same, to give *a rapid succession of ideas without the trouble of thinking*, for that is properly *recreation*. An hour spent in walking through a crowded metropolis may change the current of ideas more than thrice the time in the stillness and silence of the country. For there can be no recreation, when we leave not our studies as well as our closets behind, but are occupied in solving problems rather than with the scene before us. Exercise out of doors is the best of all recreations, for it is good both for body and mind ; but to be constantly pursued, or to produce the full benefit, it must be attended with amusement ; and this the city affords without the trouble of a search.

Though a simple air be often exquisitely beautiful, it tires the sooner from its simplicity ; but how charming is the return when for a while we had almost lost it amidst a maze of variations !

“ With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,  
The melting voice through mazes running.”<sup>10</sup>

And how delightful is the poem from which these lines are taken, from the boundless diversity of objects which it brings before us !

We might bring forward numberless other illustrations of the great principle of variety ; such as the pleasure derived from the alternation of day and night, from the change of seasons, the variety of climates, and the consequent diversity of productions

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<sup>10</sup> L' Allegro.

in the same or in different countries ; but as probably enough has been said to fix the attention of the reader, it is unnecessary, and might be tiresome, to swell the catalogue of instances.

3. Though variety be calculated to do us so much good, yet as it comes not uncalled, nor without some degree of effort, therefore routine is too apt to prevail over it, just as activity is conquered by love of repose. To move or to change our course of life, is always difficult ; to do nothing, or to do the same thing, is always easy. Consequently, there is a perpetual tendency to rest and to routine, and since these are in the end prejudicial, for the one roots out our virtues, and both undermine our enjoyments, therefore we ought to wage a constant war against them.

A familiar instance of both these tendencies may be derived from the well known fact, that for centuries past, in civilized countries, and among persons in easy circumstances, the hours of rising and of going to bed have gradually become later and later. To get up of a morning is always an effort, for we pass from rest to action, from a continuance in the same state to one very different. For the same reasons it is also an effort to go to bed, greater if seated in our room, less if we have been walking out. Therefore all people have a tendency to put off the time for bed, but sedentary people especially, and this is another cause why they cannot rise very early. Few habits are more difficult to acquire than that of early rising, where no necessity compels, the change being so violent from the long-continued and com-

plete repose of the night to all the activity of day.<sup>11</sup> This example may suffice to show that the law of *vis inertiae* is not confined to matter. And since the habit is so difficult of acquirement, we see how important it is that it should be early taught at schools and colleges.<sup>12</sup>

4. The most simple idea of change is that of a *succession of phenomena in time*. This is common both to change in mind, and to change in matter, or motion; but the latter is more complicated, for it comprehends succession in time and in space. As for variety, it seems to imply something more, namely, that the phenomena are different or dissimilar from each other. Thus there may be change without variety, as when a man repeats the same motion of his limbs over and over again, or allows the same train of ideas to pass through his head without any alteration. Even in this case, each separate phenomenon is different from that immediately before it, though the whole train may be similar to the one preceding. When the successive trains of thought or of motion are different, then there is properly

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<sup>11</sup> I remember hearing that a young man was once expelled from Cambridge, for obstinately refusing to get up for morning chapel. Frederick the Great, wishing to get up every morning at four o'clock, began by obliging his attendant to throw cold water on his face in order to rouse him; and thenceforward he persevered in the habit of early rising all his life.

<sup>12</sup> People the most fond of novelty may still be much given to routine, like the French, who, as Chateaubriand says, are *Routiniers à la fois et Novateurs*. My own experience agrees with this remark.

variety, which therefore is more powerful than simple change.

II. NOVELTY. It is evident that novelty is only a species of change ; but since, as a species, it has qualities peculiar to itself, it is necessary to mention what they are. In its strict sense, novelty implies a change to something which we have never experienced ; and on that account, its effect upon our sensibilities is far greater than simple change, and even than variety, which signifies only that a train of phenomena is dissimilar from that which immediately preceded. But the term is not always employed in this strict sense, for after a long interval, we are wont to say of something formerly known, that it is now quite a novelty, that it is, as it were, New.

That first impressions can never be renewed, is a fact in human nature which cannot be disputed, but which admits of no full explanation. It would be easy to give a mere verbal account of this, as of many other phenomena, and to say that the nerves are softened or blunted by use ; that the animal spirits fly off on once being excited, and cannot again be fixed, and so forth : but this is mere jargon, and it is better to avow our ignorance, than to shroud it in a veil of darkness. One thing, however, is certain, that part of the effect of novelty depends upon the emotion of wonder which attends upon what is new, for the new is generally unexpected. At least, the less the expectation, the greater is the effect produced. When we have long looked forward to any thing, and especially when we have made sure of it beforehand, the reality seems less new, for anticipation is as a

foretaste which damps our relish of the banquet, and in this case, there can be no surprise. Still, novelty has a charm of its own, independent of the pleasure of wonder, as when an eldest son succeeds to his paternal acres, or an heir apparent to his father's crown. In these instances, there cannot be wonder, for in the usual course of nature the succession could be reckoned upon, but the new position is delightful. Therefore the pleasure peculiar to novelty is not entirely owing to surprise.

Whatever the explanation may be, the fact itself is interesting and important. Poets, in all ages, have sung the charms of first love, as something which never could come again, and in such a case, poets are, probably, the best judges.

“ New hopes may rise, and days may come  
Of milder, calmer, beam,  
But there's nothing half so sweet in life  
As love's young dream.”<sup>13</sup>

A second marriage, especially to a woman, is a very different thing from a first; and so is a first birth to the mother, who feels an exultation and joy that never can return. She seems to herself a creature of a more dignified order, and she treads the earth with a new step, for “a man is born into the world.” And if such be her delight at viewing her first babe, what must be that of the author, at the sight of his first work? Sweeter than sweetest music, or the sound “of far off torrents charming the dull night,” fall the notes of new praise on his ear. He may afterwards

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<sup>13</sup> Moore.



rise into reputation, he may become known in his own country, perhaps over all Europe, or even throughout the world; but never can he forget the hour when his heart first beat to fame. What an event is the first success in public, on the stage, in the pulpit, at the bar, or in the senate! what can equal the triumph of a maiden speech? So the first gains, though small, are dearer than thousands afterwards.

If youth be preferable to age, it is chiefly owing to novelty. This it is which constitutes the principal delight of infancy, of boyhood, and of youth, and gives those periods a peculiar character. With novelty are of course associated inexperience, ignorance, rashness, and presumption, which belong to early life, and lead it into numberless errors; but youth, with all its faults, has more the stamp of divinity. Its very illusions are glorious, for is it not glorious to think men better than they are, and to dream of future years when the reign of liberty shall commence, and chase before it ignorance, vice, and want?<sup>14</sup>

But novelty sharpens the edge of pain as well as of pleasure. A first disappointment, and a first grief, are felt more deeply than far greater disasters afterwards. First crossings in love, the first quarrel of

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<sup>14</sup> When seated on the top of Fiesole, enjoying the magnificent view, Forsyth says; "My poetical emotions were soon interrupted by an old peasant, who sat down at the same resting-place, and thus addressed his companion, *Che bell' occhiata, guardiamo un po' la nostra Firenze. Quanto è bella! quanto cattiva!—Ah gigi! quante ville! quante vigne! quanti poderi! ma non v'e nulla di nostro.* Those notes of exclamation end in a selfishness peculiar to age." "Remarks," &c. on Italy.

friends, first losses in trade, the first lapse into vice, wound like a barbed and poisoned dart. Who ever mourned the loss of a second child as of a first? Nay, parents have been known to grieve more for the death of an infant, than afterwards for a full-grown child; as if the suckling of a day were more precious than the youth of twenty. At first, to quit home for school, is indeed a severe trial; the second time, comparatively nothing. So, when the decaying beauty first sees some grey hairs, she is struck at once to the heart; but when they become numerous, she cares much less about them.

We have already had occasion to observe, that variety has the effect of lengthening apparent time and distance; and the same may be said of novelty. Thus, a road first travelled over seems longer than ever afterwards, though the number and variety of objects be the same. For, though they be the same in themselves, they have not the same effect upon us, since all things strike us more at first, and many are then remarked which are totally unnoticed afterwards; so that, judging by the number and force of our impressions, we fancy the way to be longer on the former occasion.

III. CONTRAST. In one sense, Contrast is nothing but a striking variety, that is, a change to something very different from what immediately preceded; and so far the observations above made on variety also apply here, but with a double force. The term, however, is frequently used when there is no succession of phenomena in time, and consequently no change properly so called; as when we say of a

picture, that it presents a fine contrast of light and shade. In this case, the whole picture is supposed to be before the eye at the same instant of time, and the impression is simultaneous ; so that, in such instances, contrast is mere dissimilarity, the reverse of similarity or sameness. But in whichever sense the word be used, great dissimilarity, with or without change, has a powerful effect on our sensibilities. This is a necessary consequence of what has been said in the former part of the chapter ; but as contrast has some peculiar features, it may not be amiss to dwell on it a little longer.

It may be said with truth that much of the enjoyment of life depends upon a happy mixture of Series and Contrast. Without the one, our time is not sufficiently filled up, and therefore we fall into ennui ; without the other, our sensibilities are deadened, or our minds fatigued by uniformity. Series or continuity in one line is agreeable to a certain extent, and is even necessary to render every subject interesting, for unless we continue, nothing makes a deep impression, and nothing can be completed. Perseverance, which is so much lauded, and which indeed does wonders, is nothing but a steady desire leading to a continuous line of action. Without continuity, love, friendship, and family affection, would be merely a passing whim. In smaller matters also we may remark a pleasure from continuance. Thus, we are certainly the better pleased with the character of Falstaff because we meet with him in one play after another, for we have time to become thoroughly acquainted with him, and feel for him as an old friend.

The same may be said of the part of Sir Harry Wildair, in Farquhar's two celebrated comedies. We welcome the husband of Angelica, whom we had known in his bachelor days.

Of the palpable results of continuity it is unnecessary to say much, because they are palpable; so I shall content myself with one instance. The noblest temple now existing in the world, if it be not superior to any that ever existed, St. Peter's at Rome, is, with all its embellishments, inward as well as outward, the result of efforts continued during three centuries.

Many instances of the effect of contrast, in either sense of the word, may be found in common life. It is a principle practically acted upon by all epicures, cooks, and skilful housewives, who take good care to oppose boiled to roast, sweet to salt, and drest dishes to plain, knowing that the one is more agreeable after the other. But contrast is also a grand source of beauty. It is well known that a concert entirely made up of the most beautiful music is not the most effective, and that some inferior pieces must be inserted to relieve the uniformity and set off the rest to advantage. What a marvellous effect is sometimes produced by the contrast of light and shade in a picture! and how tame is the one without the other! The same may be said of scenery. There are countries where all is so rich that we are almost surfeited, and where a dreary moor or barren rock would give relief. The admirers of picturesque scenery have probably little reason to complain of the desolation of some parts of Scotland, which serves only to enhance the beauty of the rest. A bare or a heathy

mountain may in itself be less pleasing than a green, but it contrasts better with the verdure of the vale below. Gordon Castle would be fine in any situation ; but when seen after travelling over the dreary plains of Aberdeenshire, it seems an enchanted palace. That English traveller who was so appalled at the bleakness of Drymen Moor, that he turned round his horses' heads and drove back with all speed to the south, knew not that a little perseverance would have brought to view the lake of Menteith, and the vale of Aberfoyle, rendered more lovely by contrast. Switzerland is a country of contrasts ; rich valleys being opposed to bare peaks, green pastures to eternal snows, corn fields, and even vineyards lying close to masses of ice. In many parts of America there is too much uniformity from the enormous quantity of wood, but when the wide Savannah bursts upon the view, how refreshing must be the contrast ! Every one has been struck with the peculiar beauty of trees in the midst of a town, with the squares in London, the Tuileries and Boulevards in Paris, and this charm of the *rus in urbé* is owing to the same principle.

But if contrast be a source of beauty, so likewise is similarity, and the best effects are produced by a happy mixture of the two. How imposing is a body of soldiers in uniform ! but how much more striking is some contrast of uniforms, or a mixture of horse and foot ! Regularity in buildings is certainly a source of beauty, but it may be carried too far, as for instance, in the new town of Edinburgh, which in itself is tame from uniformity, though it pleases as

opposed to the old. Other towns entirely modern and regular are insipid in the last degree. London is a much cleaner and more convenient city than Paris, but it is far less striking to the eye, from the lowness of the houses, the prevalence of brick, and also from the want of contrast. Thus, its very excellencies are opposed to beauty.

The due disposition of colours, and hence the art of dress, depends, in great measure, on a proper union of contrast and similarity. In France, where dress is almost reduced to a science, it is well known what colours go well or ill together ; and the general principle seems to be that those which suit are either very different or else mere shades of the same. Thus black, or purple, or deep blue, and scarlet form a very pleasing mixture, as well as black and white, blue and yellow, brown and pink, lastly, lilac and green : whereas, yellow and green, or blue and green are decidedly disagreeable. In the former case the colours are strongly opposed, while in the latter they are too much alike without being quite the same. But a dark and a light shade of the same colour are never amiss, for here there is similarity as well as contrast ; though the shades ought not to approach too much, unless they become identical. A French *élégante* will rummage half the shops in the town in search of a ribbon, or waist-band, that may exactly match her gown.

Why are the English, a grave, regular, and busy people, exceedingly fond of broad humour, and even of low buffoonery, the French less so, while they can listen with the greatest patience to the lengthy

speeches of their tragedies, which tire an Englishman to death? The reason may be, that each is a contrast to the prevailing humour of sedateness or of volatility. The mania of the English for travelling seems also to take its rise from their usual regularity, which at last renders contrast necessary; while the French, who court little varieties, less need such a violent change.

In a former chapter we have shown how much the passion of love is indebted to contrast, while friendship owes more to similarity; and we might proceed to point out how useful is contrast in the constitution of our own minds, in the characters who surround us, and also in the body politick; but we pretend not to exhaust the subject, only to throw out hints for the reader's own meditation. We shall therefore proceed to another and kindred principle.

IV. PRIVATION. Though the principle of Privation be not quite the same as that of variety, yet as they are closely connected and even in part coincide, it seemed advisable to treat of them in one chapter. And having already in the course of this inquiry, brought forward many instances of the principle, we shall now be the more brief.

The principle is simply this: that the actual loss or privation of any element of happiness, or even the fear of such loss or privation, causes us to value it more highly, and to enjoy it more on the return. And the reason why we value it more is, that the pain we feel at the loss or merely at the fear of loss, makes us sensible how necessary the object is to our happiness. For, when well at ease, we are but too

apt to forget the *sources* of our felicity. And that we should value that highly which we find to be conducive to our happiness is an ultimate fact in human nature. So far the effects of privation are distinct from those of variety. But when we inquire why after losing an object we enjoy it more on the return, this can be accounted for only on the latter principle; for after actual privation the return is a decided change, and fear of loss is almost the same as the reality. A man who greatly feared to lose a beloved friend is almost as much rejoiced at his recovery, as if he had believed him dead.

It is evident from the above that privation is not an ultimate principle, but is comprehended under another more general. Nevertheless, as a proximate principle, it is of great importance in practice, for as Bacon has observed, the *principia media* are often more fruitful and applicable than the *principia generalissima*.

It follows directly from the above principle that some pain enhances, and, may be, is essential to pleasure. Could we get rid of every sort of uneasiness, and vary our enjoyments in every conceivable way, still it is probable that at last they would become quite insipid from the absence of a sufficient contrast, which pain alone can supply. Pleasure in all its forms would probably not be enough without an ingredient of a totally different nature, for we see that those who pursue enjoyment with the most ardour, and who can vary it in every way, never fail to tire of it if obtained with too much ease, that is, without some pain. This then is the true salt which seasons every dish. The truth is a consequence of the general



principle of variety, and more particularly of that of privation, and is also agreeable to experience.

After dwelling so long on variety, we need add little under the present head. We shall therefore confine ourselves to a very few illustrations.

Nothing is more generally recommended by moralists, parents, and guardians, than temperance, and this is voluntary privation in a limited degree. Without temperance, our minds as well as our bodies are prematurely worn out, and we become old in feelings and constitution before we have numbered half our days, palsied in sensibility as well as limb, spectres who seem to live for no purpose but to warn and terrify others. Abstinence is more powerful and often more practicable than temperance, because, after a temporary but total denial the return is a greater change than after partial fruition; and because a partial enjoyment creates a hankering for more. If then, an indulgence be bad, endeavour to get rid of it at once, rather than by slow degrees. Total abstinence is more powerful than partial, for who does not relish a feast the better for a long fast? Often a few mouthfuls can blunt the edge of appetite, as knowing epicures can tell. A long fast is also a sovereign remedy for many bodily ills, especially for derangement of stomach and the other digestive organs. How refreshed is the mind by getting rid of a subject entirely, and how improved in force does it return to the favourite theme! After the privations of school, home is indeed delightful; and after the hardships of the sea, every haven is happy.

The pleasures peculiar to winter depend very much

on privation ; for if we felt no cold without, should we care for the warmth within ? One who has been long exposed to the inclemencies of the weather, is so much pleased with a cheerful fire and a smoking dinner, that he is content to bask in the heat, and asks for no other amusement than to watch the changing embers. He feels an inward contentment, which excludes even a touch of ennui, and puts him in good humour with every one that surrounds him.

And here we may remark, that summer, with all its enchantments, seems more to favour ennui than the dreary season of winter. Winter may be cold and uncomfortable, but summer is apt to be listless. This difference seems in part to depend upon the presence or absence of privation peculiar to these seasons, for privation not only enhances pleasure, but it serves to occupy the mind. To keep one's self warm in very cold weather, is quite an important affair, requiring many shifts and expedients. Moreover, force is required to resist the attacks of cold, and force is opposed to listlessness. Besides all this, the long days and the fine weather in summer render greater exertions possible, especially in the open air, and knowing them to be possible, therefore we feel a want of them. If any definite desire arise out of this want, activity of course ensues, otherwise we are conscious of indolence, and instantly fall into ennui. In proof of this, where the climate is so hot, as scarcely to admit of exercise during the day, exercise is neither thought of nor missed. There, the object is to keep one's self cool, and even this may become an occupation.

It would be vain to deny that the rich have im-

mense advantages over the poor, but the principal drawback to their enjoyments arises from very abundance. They are constantly striving to do away with all privations, to level all difficulties, and to smooth the path of life as we have our highways; but such, alas! is the fatality attached to man, that with all his efforts he cannot get rid of uneasiness. In vain does he put on armour and betake himself to a tower of strength, fortified by every art; for a foe that ever watches an opportunity, must find some unguarded spot. Were there nothing to fear without, there would still be an enemy within; and were there peace abroad, there would be sedition at home. When a man has nothing substantial to annoy him, he raises an airy spirit and fights with it as a reality. If we must have some uneasiness, it is better on the whole that it assume a palpable form; as an open enemy is preferable to one in ambuscade. Some degree of hardship and privation is therefore certainly a good, for this is the true magician that lays the phantoms of the brain. In combating with real evils, the mind exerts force and feels a pride in the victory; but in warring with spectres, it knows its weakness, and is conscious only of humility. In these combats alone, while defeat is disgraceful, conquest brings no triumph.

But however wholesome privation may be for the mind as well as for the body, yet, always implying some uneasiness, it is seldom a welcome visitor. To the mass of mankind who are employed in labour, it is, alas! but too well known, and therefore to recommend it to them, would be only a mockery. By the

rich, however, it ought to be considered as a necessary whet to the numerous sources of enjoyment which fortune has placed within their reach. And let them not turn away from this useful but rough remedy, like children from a bitter dose, for they will find that the subsequent good far more than compensates the evil. Besides, the consciousness of privations and hardships undergone is attended with a secret satisfaction, unknown to the pampered sons of ease and luxury.

There is another grand principle of happiness, which it may be necessary here to mention, though after what has been said elsewhere, I do not intend to dilate on it in this place. This is Liberty, so dear to every human heart. Liberty in every form is not only eminently delightful in itself, but is also essential to many other sources of enjoyment ; in particular, to activity and variety, those powerful causes of happiness to the individual. Nor is liberty of less importance to man, as member of a political society, for without liberty there can be no security for good government. But, as this subject has been already treated at large, I shall content myself on the present occasion with referring to a former work ; for, though civil liberty be there more particularly dwelt upon, yet the nature of liberty in general, and its influence upon the happiness of the individual, have also been pointed out.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See Political Discourses, Dis. on Civil Liberty, in particular chap. i. and iv.

## CHAPTER IV.

## ON CUSTOM OR REPETITION.

OPPOSED to the principle of Variety, is that of Repetition. Custom and repetition mean the same thing, but the latter term is precise and clear, whereas the former is often confounded with habit, which is properly one of its effects. On this account, the phrase, principle of repetition, seems to me to be preferable. But whichever term we may adopt, the principle is highly important, and its effects are so complicated, that they appear to me to have never been thoroughly understood. It is hoped then, that the reader will not refuse his attention, should it even be more called upon, than in the course of the preceding pages.

The effects of repetition are two-fold, primary or original, and secondary or derivative. Of the former kind we may enumerate three distinct effects. First, repetition gives a *facility* in performing all bodily and mental exercises, even those which at first were very difficult. This effect of repetition is so well known, that it is unnecessary to dwell upon it, or to bring forward many particular instances; but it may not be amiss to mention one of the most remarkable. To the uninitiated, nothing is more surprising or puzzling than feats of jugglery and sleight of hand, whereby

the most difficult and complicated movements are performed with unerring dexterity, and even our senses are deceived, so that trusting to them alone we should be forced to believe in a miracle. This deception must depend, in great measure, upon the excessive rapidity with which the changes are effected ; a rapidity too great to be followed by the eye of the spectator, and to be acquired only by constant repetition. For it is well known that very quick motion completely baffles the senses, as in the case of a cannon-ball ; and that even when the object is not quite invisible, no motion is seen, as is evinced by a wheel revolving with great rapidity. Sleight of hand is frivolous, and may be criminal in its object, as when practised by thieves and pickpockets ; but the art itself is interesting, as showing the power of repetition, and deserves more general attention than hitherto it has received.

Secondly. Frequent repetition gives a *tendency* to repeat the same thing again, a tendency so great as in many cases scarcely to be resisted. One circumstance, in particular, which renders resistance difficult, in the case of bodily movements, is, that after a time we become scarcely if at all aware of them ; and the extraordinary phænomenon is presented of voluntary actions performed almost without volition. Almost, I say, for probably there is some volition, though it is so fleeting and makes so little impression that we forget it the instant afterwards. With respect to mental changes, though we cannot be insensible to these, for that would be a manifest contradiction, yet after long custom, thoughts enter as if by stealth,

and over-power the mind before they are much attended to. However strong may be our wish to prevent the recurrence of such thoughts, it is difficult to resist so insidious a tendency. They may be compared to the predatory Arabs, who give no warning to their foes, but are ever ready for attack. It is this tendency which is properly called *habit*.

Thirdly. Repetition tends to deaden all our sensibilities, whether of pain or of pleasure. In certain cases, particularly when long continued, it gives rise to a peculiar feeling of mental or bodily fatigue, as we have seen in the preceding chapter in tracing the effects of uniformity.

Such are the primary effects of Custom or Repetition. But in addition to these, there are other and secondary effects upon our sensibilities, that are produced by means of three things which arise out of repetition, and which either favour or counteract those primary consequences. These are Remembrance, Comparison, and Facility, the effects of which it now remains to investigate.

When we view an object which formerly was a source of pleasure, in addition to the gratification which we experience from the actual presence of that object, we recollect the satisfaction which it afforded us on one or more occasions. And the recollection of pleasure being itself pleasing, whatever was so connected with our past enjoyments as to suggest them to us afterwards, becomes thus a source of delight. It is this agreeable remembrance which constitutes the pleasure of custom. For, if there be pleasures of novelty, so likewise of custom, which as

we now see, arise not from it immediately, but from remembrance, the result of repetition.

When the object which serves to recall former pleasure is an animated being, particularly of our own kind, since in this way he becomes a source of gratification, we are naturally inclined to love him for this reason alone. But this inclination will be much strengthened if we know that our past pleasure was *intentional* on his part. Thus does the pleasure of custom, that is, an agreeable remembrance, tend to create affection. Again, it is natural to suppose that the recollection of many pleasures should have a greater effect than the remembrance only of a few. In this way is explained that love or friendship which arises out of long acquaintance.

What is true of pleasure, applies to pain. As there are pleasures of remembrance of which some give rise to love, so are there pains of remembrance of which some create hatred.

The effect of custom in deadening our sensibilities is thus, as we see, counteracted, in a greater or less degree, by the remembrance that springs from repetition.

But if the effects of custom be weakened by retrospection, so likewise by anticipation, which arises directly from the former. There is a well known tendency in the mind to believe that what has been will continue to be ; so that if we have experienced any pleasure or pain for a long while, we are inclined to think that we shall for some time to come. And the longer has been our past experience, the firmer is our conviction for the future. It is evident that



this anticipation must serve to increase the present pleasure or pain, and so to counteract the primary effect of custom.

We have now to take notice of a fact which seems to be indisputable, that the more intense the original pleasure or pain, the sooner is it diminished by repetition. This seems to be an ultimate fact, not to be traced any further. But, although we cannot assign any cause for the primary effect, yet when the pleasure or pain has already begun to be diminished, we can point out a secondary cause which accelerates the decline. This is the principle of Comparison. When a pleasure at first lively has been somewhat deadened by repetition, we can scarcely help comparing its present dullness with its former vivacity, as also with the hope we had formed that such vivacity would last; for we are prone to imagine that what pleased us greatly at first, will do so on another occasion. This double comparison with the past reality, and with the expectations then created, is all to the disadvantage of the present, and engenders a feeling of disappointment, which weakens, if it do not destroy, whatever pleasure is left. And the greater the pleasure at first, and therefore the hope for the future, the more room will there be for disappointment, and it will also be more sure and speedy; seeing that repetition will the sooner produce its effect. This is the reason why violent love not unfrequently passes into deadly hate. With respect to pain, the case is similar. When we compare a past and intense pain with the same now deadened by custom, we feel a certain satisfaction at the improve-

ment in our condition, and this must diminish the uneasiness, or even cause the balance to fall on the side of pleasure.

So far comparison *favours* the primary tendency of custom, and enables it more surely and speedily to destroy both our pains and pleasures; whereas, simple remembrance has just the contrary effect.

But, when the original pleasure was weak, repetition has less effect upon it, and therefore the present enjoyment, increased by a crowd of recollections and consequent anticipations, is more likely to exceed the primitive, and afford a favourable comparison. This is a reason why marriages begun with a small but real affection frequently turn out well. In like manner, a pain at first trifling may by continuance become intolerable, being increased by accumulated recollections, and the disagreeable comparison hence drawn between our present and our past condition. In these cases the effect of comparison is exactly the reverse of the former, for now it *counteracts* the primary tendency of custom. When therefore the pleasure or pain was at first intense, comparison assists the deadening influence of repetition; but when it was originally weak, comparison, like recollection, is opposed to that influence.

We have seen that Facility is a primary effect of repetition. In order therefore to complete our theory of custom, it is necessary to state how facility effects our feelings.

When we enter upon any new undertaking or new mode of life, or associate with new people, we generally experience some embarrassment from our

ignorance and awkwardness. Every thing is so strange that we know not well what to do, nor could we readily perform our part though we had studied it theoretically. And as this condition is not without uneasiness, the charms of novelty are thereby somewhat impaired. As, by degrees, we get more accustomed to persons or things around us, not only is this strangeness removed, but a positive pleasure arises from the ease we now feel as contrasted with our previous embarrassment. But, after long custom this contrast is forgotten, and the facility may become so great as scarcely to touch our feelings ; for where there is perfect ease there can be no uncertainty, and therefore neither hope, nor fear, nor surprise at any success. Thus facility at first counter-balances, and afterwards assists the primary and deadening influence of custom.

When first we visit a city containing many interesting objects, we are apt to be bewildered, and not unfrequently spend most of our time on that which is least worth notice. The pleasure of novelty is thus somewhat diminished. But, on a second visit we know at once where to go, and what is likely to please us most, and this knowledge and facility frequently render the second more agreeable than the first visit. Besides, on the return we are less liable to disappointment, for we are aware what to expect. Lastly, after repeated returns, our sensibilities become blunted, and the very facility we experience contributes to this effect.

2. Having now traced the effects of repetition, secondary as well as primary, we shall draw some

practical applications from the foregoing theory, and conclude with a few general reflections on the good and evil of custom.

Since the immediate tendency of repetition is to deaden both our pains and pleasures, the grand problem to be solved is how to encourage this tendency in the one case and counteract it in the other. With this view we must attend to those circumstances arising out of repetition, which, as we have seen, modify its primary consequences.

It is evident, in the first place, from what has been above stated, that the more intense is any enjoyment the less frequently ought it to be repeated ; for, the keener the edge of pleasure, the sooner is it blunted by repetition ; and the more rapid the change, the more unfavourable is the comparison formed between the present and the past. When the past is as yesterday, remembrance is of course lively, and therefore a falling off is the more observed and felt. In this case, the secondary effects of custom coinciding with the primary, we have a double reason against too frequent repetition. And be it observed, that breaks or interruptions are here the less to be regretted, since we can live so long on the remembrance of a vivid delight. Thus the principle of privation comes to our aid to prevent our enjoyments being diminished or destroyed by custom. *Carefully to withdraw our pleasures from the dominion of custom, especially those more intense, is then our first maxim, and one of vital importance.*

To bring our pains under the dominion of custom may at first seem an absurd attempt ; for it may be

said, would any one seek to continue pain in order to subdue it by repetition? Would not this be to embrace as means the very end to be avoided? assuredly: but as there are many pains which we cannot entirely avoid, these may be much deadened by repetition, if allowed to exert all its influence. How then can this be done? simply by withdrawing those causes which weaken the effects of repetition; remembrance of the past, and its consequence, dread of the future.

Hence the great importance of not dwelling upon past pains: but with respect to pleasure, we must adopt a system just the reverse. We have already seen that the most obvious method of neutralizing the deadening influence of repetition, is at once to break the custom by change, especially by privation. But it follows from what has been above stated, that the influence of repetition may be also opposed by allowing our thoughts to dwell upon past pleasures, which will naturally give rise to pleasing anticipations of the future. We ought also as much as possible to encourage or discourage comparison, according as it is to the advantage or disadvantage of the present. When the pleasure has been of slow growth, we can dwell upon it with perfect satisfaction; but when it was intense at first, the pleasure of recollection is apt to be impaired by comparison with our actual state; and though it may not be in our power quite to separate the one from the other, we ought always to make the attempt, for at least, we can in part succeed.

But it may be asked, how can we prevent ourselves from dwelling upon past pains? To this there is a ready

answer, by *occupation*, and by that alone. We cannot drive away *directly* any idea that haunts us ; nay, the more we attempt to *will* it away, the more pertinaciously it remains ; but we can enter upon some pursuit, or seek some amusement that may give a new turn to our thoughts. In short, *carefully to withdraw our pleasures from the dominion of custom, and to allow our pains to be subdued by it*, is our second and complete maxim. To cherish pleasure, especially of the keener sort, employ change, privation, or even long abstinence ; to heighten moderate joys, remembrance ; to expel pain, occupation : such is the general rule.

It has been remarked by Rochefoucauld that “ the grace of novelty and long custom, opposite though they be, alike prevent us from perceiving the faults of our friends.”<sup>1</sup> But custom, which renders us insensible to the faults of our friends, ought also to deaden us to their merits, according to the general principle. And assuredly it has such a tendency ; but there is this difference, that we try to forget the faults, while we cherish the remembrance of the merits. In the former case, then, custom produces its proper effect, while in the latter it is counteracted more or less by remembrance. Here we have a practical exemplification of the principles above stated.

If the maxim of Rochefoucauld be true of friends, it is so likewise of those who are bound together by a closer tie of affection. Custom, continual intercourse, renders daily companions insensible to each

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<sup>1</sup> La grace de la nouveauté et la longue habitude, quelque opposées qu’elles soient, nous empêchent également de sentir les défauts de nos amis.

other's faults, or, at least, very much deadens the pain which they at first occasioned. No doubt continual intercourse has a tendency to produce a like insensibility to good qualities : but this may be counteracted by separation and temporary absence which break the custom, as also by the pleasures of remembrance which grow out of that intercourse.

Custom may thus be productive of much good or evil in love. To secure the good effects, we must forget the faults of her we love, and carefully remember the virtues, favours, and graces : to guard against the bad effects, nothing is so powerful as separation. Absence, or separation at a distance, is the most effectual remedy of all ; but it must not be too prolonged.

We sooner become deadened by custom to bodily than mental qualities, as we see in the case of married people, who are wont to become wonderfully insensible to each other's beauty or deformity, especially to the latter, when there is affection.

In addition to the above, we may remark that intimacy has a strong tendency to produce a similarity of minds. This similarity is sometimes supposed to extend even to the body ; for there are persons who assert that married people come in time to be like each other. But without supposing any real change of features, similarity in bodily habits and in manner would have nearly the same effect, and such a resemblance almost unavoidably arises from continual intercourse. Man is an imitative animal, and always catches something of the outward habits, the feelings, or the opinions of those with whom he associates,

according to the principle of sympathy. The most striking and general instance that can be given is national character, or a certain resemblance which pervades a whole people, arising from mutual intercourse during the whole of life, and communicated from age to age. In like manner, married people who live on good terms, are generally found to approximate in their tastes and opinions, in a greater or less degree. If people really like each other, they of course feel a desire to assimilate as much as possible, and this desire must assist the natural tendency to imitation. The wish itself might do much, but when aided by the general bent, it can create a most remarkable similarity ; and this is the grand foundation for a strong and lasting affection. However great may be the attainments of another, however high his intellectual and moral qualities, if his opinions and feelings, his likings and dislikes do not resemble our own, there cannot be permanent love. Great is the pleasure we experience on finding an individual whose opinions, and still more whose tastes, harmonize with our own ; and pleasure caused by another is the true bond of attachment.<sup>2</sup> From the above, it follows that the most salutary effect of custom is the similarity which it tends to create between those who live together, and whose happiness greatly depends upon mutual regard, for we can bear to be indifferent to strangers, but it is wretched not to like our own. “ I dwell among mine own people,”

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<sup>2</sup> We may remark that all outward marks of regard, such as kissing and shaking hands, are emblematical of mental union.



was the answer of the Shunammite to the prophet, to signify that she wanted nothing. It is this similarity, the result of custom, which justifies the assertion of the poet,

“ Quod superest, consuetudo concinnat amorem.”<sup>3</sup>

It is the want of similarity in character, proceeding from want of intercourse, as much as the difference of language, which separates the nations of the globe. The difference in opinions and tastes makes their respective inhabitants feel a mutual estrangement, often a repugnance, which philosophy can hardly cure ; and though there should not be aversion, there seldom is much cordiality. Frequent intercourse alone can wear down the points of difference, and produce a more general agreement, either between nations or individuals. Thus we see that much more uniformity of character prevails among the French than among the English, for the former cannot live without constant society, while the latter are more retired. This is the reason why England abounds so much in originals.

We shall now bring forward a case formerly mentioned, not of very common occurrence, but certainly

<sup>3</sup> Lucretius, Lib. iv.

The lines immediately preceding, along with useful advice to the fair sex, hold out an encouragement to those less gifted with personal charms :

Nec divinitus interdum, venerisque sagittis,  
Deteriore fit ut forma muliercula ametur.  
Nam facit ipsa suis interdum femina factis,  
Morigerisque modis, et munde corpore culto,  
Ut facile insuescat secum vir degere vitam.

not out of nature, which may serve more fully to exemplify the foregoing principles. A passion, at first exceedingly ardent, having been weakened or even totally subdued on a closer intimacy, a new feeling springs up after a lapse of time, small at the commencement, but gradually ripening into a real though calm affection. Here we have an example of the two effects of custom at different periods. But the original passion being supposed very strong, a long time must intervene between its decay and the growth of a new affection; for the remembrance of its former intensity, and of the glowing expectations then formed, must establish a comparison dreadfully to the disadvantage of the present. When the vivacity of the recalled feelings has been effectually dulled by time, then and then only can we look for a renewed regard.

Great and manifold are the pleasures of recollection. But recollections are of two sorts, real and imaginary, the former being the remembrance of facts which we ourselves have witnessed, the latter merely a fancied recalling of events long gone by, known to us by tradition or history. The incidents of our own past life may be either pleasing or painful, and so may the events of history; but, in the latter case, there is generally an interest attached to them which turns the balance decidedly on the side of pleasure. We may weep over the ruins of Carthage and the loss of liberty in Greece or Rome, we may deplore the fate of Cato and Brutus and the triumph of their unprincipled foes, but on the whole we are agreeably moved. The interest is one of humanity, but not peculiar to ourselves, and therefore we are neither in-

different nor over-anxious. And here we may remark that ancient history is in general more interesting than modern, except it be the history of the period very near to our own times. Besides the particular nature of the events connected with the variety of ancient governments and the greater liberty that prevailed in Greece and Rome than in Europe till of late years, there are general reasons why old or else nearly contemporaneous times should be more interesting than the intervening period. The difference in manners, customs, and religion, gives a peculiar character to antiquity, and forms a striking contrast with what we see, especially when the history is perused in the original authors, who mention many curious particulars, passed over by later writers. When Tacitus for instance tells us casually that Agrippina, on visiting Tiberius, found him offering a sacrifice to his father, who is not rapidly transported back to pagan Rome, to a scene very different from the present? Moreover this difference of customs, joined to the remoteness of the period, allows more scope for the imagination than an era similar and nearer to our own. The present is the time of reality, the past and the future of fancy, because these are imperfectly known, and the more distant and peculiar the epoch the less can we know it intimately. Fancy is a child that droops in confinement, but sports with vigour at large, and like other children, loves play more than accurate knowledge. But when the history touches on our own times, another sort of interest arises, which comes home to every bosom, for what is near must affect us in some way. On the

other hand, the middle period of history being neither sufficiently remote nor sufficiently near, it loses an interest of fancy without gaining one of reality.

To the pleasures of imaginary recollection must be attributed that peculiar favour which attends the members of ancient families and time-honoured dynasties. These individuals suggest to others a train of pleasing though fanciful recollections, and hence are looked upon with complacency. Something of the same favour or *prestige*, as the French call it, is attached even to inanimate objects, such as old buildings, and for the same reason. From this it appears that the feelings in favour of those who can boast of a long line of ancestry are founded on a fixed principle of human nature. Accordingly, we find that in every country, and in every age, even under democratical governments, in spite of the reasonings of philosophers and the ridicule of satirists,<sup>4</sup> respect has been paid to ancient families. If ever there were a country where this feeling might be supposed extinct it is the United States of America, but there, as elsewhere, an old family is held in honour. The sentiment, as we see, is derived from imagination rather than from reason, though it may not be at variance with the latter.

3. Were it not for our firm conviction, that every general principle of our nature has, on the whole, a beneficial tendency, it might fairly be questioned whether custom produce more good or evil. Certainly custom is, as Shakspeare calls it, “a monster”

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<sup>4</sup> *Stemmata quid faciunt?* says Juvenal, but in vain.

with two faces, like the countenance of Fanus, on one side lit with a smile, on the other darkened with a scowl. Facility, which is one primary effect of repetition, must certainly be considered a good, both because it is agreeable, at least to a certain extent, and because it is necessary to encourage us in any undertaking. Since no one can strive for ever with difficulties without being at last cast down, none would persevere in an arduous course were it not for increasing facility. This facility is the true reward of constancy in any pursuit, in any mental or bodily exercise, and it sometimes becomes so great as to surprise the individual himself as well as others, though less observed by him, because acquired so gradually. When we consider the power which some possess of speaking in public, for hours together, without being ever at a loss, or the wonderful rapidity with which some authors write, we shall be able to form an idea of the mental facility that may be gained by custom. In this respect none surpass the Italian Improvisatori, who, on the spur of the moment, on a subject selected by others, compose long poems, sometimes even a tragedy, and sustain each of the parts.

In the case of habit, or a *tendency* to repeat, which is another primary effect of custom, the good is alloyed with evil, for habit is a useful servant, but a dreadful master. In the performance of any action, in the indulgence of any train of thought, there ought always to be two considerations; are these thoughts and actions good for the present, and would we wish them to be repeated; for, not a deed do we perform, not an idea do we entertain, which is not thereby encou-

raged. Thus, things in themselves apparently of no moment, rise into real importance, for nothing is trivial which is apt to occur very frequently. We ought therefore to refrain from many things for no other reason than that they may grow into a habit. As compared with our past, and possibly with our future life, the present is but a point, and therefore it may not seem of so much consequence how we fill this up : but the present is father to the future, and often rules it with an iron sway. If we wish to amend our life, or merely to get rid of some foolish, unwholesome, or unpleasant practice, mental or bodily, the present is the time, for the victory is easier now than ever it will be afterwards, since each instance of repetition serves to strengthen the tendency. Is not this a convincing argument against procrastination ?

The third effect of custom, the deadening of our sensibilities, presents a still more puzzling mixture of good and evil. But there is one consideration which tends to prove that repetition has a more powerful influence in deadening our pains than our pleasures. In discussing the maxim of Rochefoucauld as to the effect of custom in blinding us to the faults of our friends, we observed that frequent intercourse would render us as insensible to their merits as to their defects, were it not that we cherish the remembrance of the one, and try to forget the other. Now this observation may be applied to our pleasures and pains generally. It is our interest to recall the former, and to consign the latter to oblivion, and therefore we attempt so to do, and in part succeed. We know, indeed, from experience, how soon hardships are for-

gotten where they cannot be traced to the agency of a human being, especially to intentional agency, which rouses the malevolent passions, long to rankle in the breast.

“ latet altâ mente repostum  
Judicium Paridis, spretæque injuria formæ.”

We also know from experience how prodigious is the power of custom in reconciling us to discomforts and privations, so as almost to make people think that we can become accustomed to anything, however disagreeable at first. No doubt, repetition also deadens our enjoyments ; but the difference is, that in the one case we allow it to produce its whole effect, or at least have an interest in doing so, while in the other, our interest being contrary, we endeavour, or ought to endeavour to counteract it as much as possible. And to do so becomes even a necessity, for the bodily uneasiness, or the mental satiety, that waits upon too much repetition, being at last insupportable, we are forced to fly to change, to temperance, or privation. Still, custom is the grand leveller ; and certainly tends to produce a greater equality between the enjoyments of different ranks of society than we could at first suppose, diminishing the advantages of the rich, as well as the evils of the poor.

Custom has a no less powerful influence on the body than on the mind. We can enumerate at least three distinct effects, two upon the muscular fibre, one upon the nervous system ; for it *facilitates* and *strengthens* muscular movement, but *diminishes* nervous agency. Every one has felt a stiffness in his

body or limbs on performing some continuous or violent action for the first time or after a long interval, and every one also knows that it soon goes off on repetition. Now, the stiffness at first was as much a proof of difficulty and effort, as its subsequent absence of facility. That custom strengthens our muscular movements admits of a palpable proof in the evident enlargement of the parts. Thus the arms of the blacksmith who wields the massy hammer, and the legs of the pedestrian and opera dancer, are thicker than those of other people. We always find that the development of the muscles in the different species of animals corresponds with the frequent movement, and that if any cause prevent that movement, the muscles become smaller, or are even quite obliterated. Birds which make much use of the wing have enormous pectoral muscles, but when they become domesticated and cease to fly, those moving powers diminish. Thus the wild duck and pheasant have much more flesh on the breast than the tame duck or common chicken. Quadrupeds, in general, have more flesh on the back and less on the breast than birds, agreeably to the nature of their movements; and in carnivorous quadrupeds, which make much use of the lower jaw, the temporal muscles are immense. Man has muscles for moving the outward ear, but, as in the civilized state he never makes use of them, they gradually fall away to nothing; whereas some savage nations are said to retain the power by keeping it up from their infancy.

In these two ways do we explain the power of custom in enabling men, or other animals, to perform



such bodily feats as at first would have been impossible. To consider what may be done, we must look to the achievements of pedestrians, which are sometimes truly astonishing, as those of Captain Barclay,<sup>5</sup> or to the rapidity of a race-horse, such as Eclipse, which could gallop a mile in a minute. The muscles becoming enlarged, there is, of course, more power, and though they were not enlarged, the greater facility of movement would render less effort necessary, and therefore there would be less fatigue.

The third effect of custom on the body is diminution of nervous agency. The most remarkable instance that can be given of this influence, is the fact, that some of the most powerful medicines lose their effect on repetition, except they be given in a constantly increasing quantity. This is particularly the case with those drugs which produce no sensible alteration on the tissues of the body, no palpable change of structure, and consequently are supposed to act directly on the nervous system. Such are opium and the whole family of narcotics. To these, it is well known, the body may be so accustomed as at length to receive with impunity what would kill any ordinary man. It seems impossible to bring forward a stronger instance of the power of custom.

Under this head must be classed the influence of custom in hardening the body, and enabling it to resist cold and other causes which otherwise would be

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<sup>5</sup> Captain Barclay walked 1000 miles in one thousand successive hours. This feat has since been even surpassed; for R. Cootes walked 1250 miles in the same time.

injurious. It is probably through the nerves that custom thus acts on the frame, for we can trace no palpable change; and its effects are known to all. It is, however, a curious question, and by no means of easy solution, how far this influence extends. It appears to me that considerable mistake prevails upon this subject, as if custom could harden the body to really unhealthy practices. There is a wide difference between practices radically unhealthy, and those which become so only by being entered upon suddenly. Frequent exposure to the open air in all seasons, frequent ablutions in cold water, frequent exercise, are really all healthy practices, and if not begun too hastily, tend greatly to strengthen the frame. But, to suppose that we can be enured by custom to drink cold water when we are hot, to sleep when over-heated on the damp ground or on cold stones, to sit or stand all day in wet clothes, to lie in damp beds, &c. seems to be a decided error. No doubt, a strong person may do such things once and again with impunity, but it will probably be found that repetition, so far from neutralizing their effects, only renders them the more certain, that each instance of repetition by impairing, though silently, the vigour of the constitution, renders it less fit to resist the evil tendency than if it were new to such practices. Does experience prove that the body can be enured by custom to such doings? In Scotland and elsewhere, where the country people are exposed from their earliest years to damp and cold, do we not find that in the decline of life they are peculiarly subject to rheumatism, and at all ages are more liable to fevers

than the rich? In war, do common soldiers better stand fatigue, or are they less prone to disease than their officers? Is it not certain that Europeans, newly arrived in India, can go through much more than the natives who have always been accustomed to a hot relaxing climate? and that natives of northern Europe, recently come to Italy, are less affected by the scirocco than Italians themselves, or foreigners long settled in the country? Heat, in particular, seems to work by degrees, and the longer it continues is resisted with the more difficulty. The same may be said of cold, which we can easily withstand for a short time, even in an intense degree, but are sure to suffer from its duration. We never bear cold so well as after being thoroughly but not over heated, as by means of a good fire, moderate exercise, or even a warm bath, not by violent efforts, which always lead to a reaction; and it is a well known fact, that Englishmen, on returning from India, feel the cold of the first winter less than the rest of their countrymen. In like manner, it seems to me that a warm summer, instead of rendering us more delicate, enables us the better to withstand the cold of the ensuing winter. The reason probably is, that heat gives a stimulus to the circulation, which effect continues long after the cause has ceased. From these facts it would appear that whatever tends to invigorate the frame, enables us to resist any outward evil, in spite of the shock of change, better than if the sudden transition had been avoided by a long continuance of the depressing causes. Let us then remember, that though repetition in many cases fortifies the constitution, yet in others it can weaken and undermine.

Nam leviter quamvis, quod crebro tunditur ictu,  
 Vincitur id longo spatio tamen, atque labascit.  
 Nonne vides, etiam guttas in saxa cadenteis  
 Humoris longo in spatio pertundere saxa? <sup>6</sup>

I cannot conclude this Chapter and the first Book of our Inquiry, without dwelling a little longer on the necessity of resisting the baneful effects of custom. If it be true universally, that a concealed is more to be dreaded than an open foe, then is custom highly dangerous, for it is an insidious enemy. When we see our opponents face to face, we know with whom we have to cope, and can prepare ourselves accordingly; but who can guard against antagonists, whose presence is not even suspected, while with secret charms they lull us into repose, and disarm us without an effort? Custom is like those drugs which deaden the sense of pain, but instead of curing disease, only conceal its ravages until they become irreparable; or like the basilisk that stupifies, before it seizes its prey. We ought, therefore, to be ever on the alert to discover this lurking foe, before our better feelings be deadened, and evil habit establish its sway; for sensibilities once destroyed cannot well be revived, and habit becomes at last as strong as nature.<sup>7</sup>

There are two emotions in particular to which I would draw the reader's attention, because they are

<sup>6</sup> Lucretius, lib. iv.

<sup>7</sup> How much is hardness of heart dwelt upon both in the Old and New Testament as the worst and most hopeless of conditions! Pharaoh hardened his heart, and would not let the children of Israel go; and the Jews are constantly upbraided for their insensibility by Moses, the Prophets, and our Saviour.

intimately connected, the one with charity to men, the other with piety to God, and are both peculiarly liable to be subdued by custom. These are Pity and Wonder. I might also dwell on the extraordinary and injurious effect of custom upon our moral sentiments, and the tendency which it has to free the veteran in sin from the best restraint upon vice, self-disapprobation, were it not that everything relating to Conscience belongs to the second Book of this Inquiry, and must not be anticipated. After this suggestion, I shall confine myself on the present occasion to the two emotions above mentioned.

Pity was evidently given to prompt us to relieve the miseries of our fellow-creatures, and restrain us from injuring them or other animals. While directly opposed to resentment, it is also one of the most powerful antagonists to self-regarding interest in all its shapes and varieties. In order to see what would follow from the absence or dullness of this principle, we have only to consult the history of those tyrants who have acquired a dreadful notoriety. Had their hearts not been hardened to pity, how could they have committed such cruelties? Probably, their first cruelties were perpetrated not without reluctance, but by each repetition they were prepared for another. When Nero poisoned Britannicus, we can suppose that he suffered more than when he put Seneca to death, or committed any subsequent enormity.

But we need not resort to such monstrous instances in order to show how custom can harden the heart to compassion, that most amiable of emotions; for the experience of every day attests the fact, and shows its

deplorable consequences. Animals in a tame state, depend for their good treatment upon our pity as well as our interest, and how easily is a habit acquired of harshness and cruelty towards them ! Indeed, some people become so accustomed to abuse them as not to be aware that they are doing so, and they would be quite astonished at being accused of hard-heartedness. This is a case where custom rules supreme, because horses and many other animals utter no piercing cries by which we can be forcibly awakened to a knowledge of their distress. In the instance of butchers, insensibility to the sufferings of animals is carried to the utmost extent of which our nature is susceptible, and, though, in a certain degree, hardness may be required in that trade, yet it is often carried so far as to be the cause of unnecessary torture to those helpless creatures.<sup>8</sup>

When we live with those who are constantly complaining of the state of their health, whether such complaints be well-founded or not, we cease to feel for them as at first, while strangers, who see them but rarely, are moved with pity, and are astonished

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<sup>8</sup> For some striking instances of the insensibility of butchers, see Dr. Chalmer's *Sketches of Moral and Mental Philosophy*, and note in particular the anecdote of the retired butcher, who amused himself occasionally by killing a lamb. Though he had retired from business, yet, in his own words, "he just sticket a lamb now and then for his diversion." Ch. vi. p. 264. There is another anecdote of a wretch, who used at times to do his work upon the animal by halves, because "he just wanted to see how it would carry on." No one, not previously hardened by custom, could have indulged such a horrible curiosity.

at our insensibility. Must we not then suppose, that a class of men who are always hearing complaints and witnessing disease and pain, will often become hard as iron? A certain degree of insensibility may be necessary for medical men, more especially for surgeons, but still the effect is deplorable on many accounts, for though the rich may command attention, the poor must frequently suffer from indifference, negligence, or simply from harshness of manner. How difficult must it be to secure proper care in hospitals, where the patients being poor, and even attended gratuitously, their complaints are the less listened to without doors or within, and where physicians, surgeons, apothecaries, and nurses, are not only hardened by custom, but wink at each other's omissions! It is the glory of Catholicism to have replaced those unfeeling creatures that elsewhere wait upon the sick, by an order whose charity is warmed by religious zeal. The life of a sister of charity may be looked upon as the brightest specimen of practical Christianity.

Were a man set down in this world at once, with his mind in a state of maturity, he would probably be overwhelmed with astonishment at the various objects around him; but his greatest subject of wonder would be the general insensibility to all the marvels of creation. He might however suppose, that men had in time found out the explanation of these phenomena, and that wonder had ceased upon further knowledge. But what would be his surprise to find, that very little is known, and that those who know the least, are often the least struck with surrounding objects.

He might next begin to suspect that he was unlike the rest of mankind, or that he alone was awake while they were in a trance ; until by a little experience, he had been able to discover that the faculties of others were similar to his own, but that those had grown by degrees, while his sprang up at once ; that in the one case, objects had become familiar before they could be appreciated, while in the other they struck upon the mature mind with all the force of novelty. In short, his surprise would lessen when he knew the power of Custom.

Of all the effects of custom, none is more to be lamented than its tendency to render us insensible to the instances of design which everywhere crowd around us. It is certain that every department of nature abounds with proofs of the existence of an intelligent First Cause, and that not a sun can rise or set without showing forth his wisdom and omnipotence. But man, insensible man, has witnessed these proofs so often and so early, that he allows them to pass unnoticed, or regards them with a vacant stare, and thinks, because he has always seen them, that they never could have been otherwise. If asked why he believes that the sun will rise to-morrow, he will probably laugh at the enquirer's folly, or should he deign to answer, he will say that it has always done so. He is so used to the regular return of the seasons, that he thinks not of the admirable contrivance evinced by this regularity, nor reflects that a derangement of the system, were it but for a day, might blast all the fruits of the earth and destroy mankind by famine. Thus custom or experience, which is our



safest guide in practice, deadens curiosity and wonder, and so prevents us from investigating the proximate causes of things, or from looking beyond these to one great and intelligent cause. Man, in the present world, is like one introduced into an enchanted palace, having his senses stupified by a sleeping draught. He marks not the glories which everywhere surround him, and treads unconsciously over the most precious objects, regardless of the mind that planned, or the hand that raised, such a fair and well-furnished edifice.

Though the case above put be imaginary, for no one can arrive at maturity with a mind still new to everything, yet none can become familiar with all the phenomena of nature before the faculties come to perfection. When the young man of twenty first attends a lecture on anatomy, he is as new to the subject as our imaginary being to all things, for the outward form of man tells nothing of the marvels within. On witnessing, with a mind still fresh, the admirable formation of the various organs, and their perfect adaptation to each other, who has not been impressed with the first great truth of religion, and felt his heart swell with emotions of reverence and of gratitude? Our novice, we may suppose, is examining the structure of the hand, particularly the complicated arrangement of its bones and muscles, the latter perforated exactly in the proper places to allow the tendons to pass on to the extremities and move the farther digits ; when the existence of a Deity comes upon him with a force which defies all scepticism.

But when, in course of time, our ingenuous youth

has become a hackneyed practitioner, forgetting his first and true impressions, he may pass over all these wonders as if they were nothing remarkable. Nay, from constantly dwelling on the material structure, he may at last come to imagine that there is nothing else in the universe, that matter arranged itself without the aid of mind, or that mind is merely a modification of matter. Thus a science which best of all proves the being of a God, becomes through custom a source of irreligion. Is it not then our interest and our duty to arrest the growth of the monster before it swallow up all that is most precious, our tender sympathies, our piety, our temporal joys, our hopes of a blessed immortality? Other foes may be levelled at a blow, but custom for ever revives, and wearies us out by repetition, till we yield our necks to the yoke, and casting down our eyes to the dust, pursue the weary round, unconscious of the glories of the firmament and the beauties of surrounding earth.

## NOTES.

NOTE A, p. 165.

*George Dandin.* C'est ainsi que vous satisfaites aux engagements de la foi que vous m'avez donnée publiquement ?

*Angelique.* Moi ? Je vous ne l'ai point donnée de bon cœur, et vous me l'avez arrachée. M'avez vous avant le mariage, demandé mon consentement, et si je voulois bien de vous ? Vous n'avez consulté pour cela que mon pere et ma mere ; ce sont eux, proprement, qui vous ont épousé ; et c'est pourquoi vous ferez bien de vous plaindre toujours à eux des torts que l'on pourra vous faire. Pour moi, qui ne vous ai point dit de vous marier avec moi, et que vous avez prise sans consulter mes sentimens, je prétends n'être point obligée à me soumettre en esclave à vos volontés ; et je veux jouir, s'il vous plaît, de quelque nombre de beaux jours que m'offre la jeunesse, prendre les douces libertés que l'âge me permet, voir un peu le beau monde, et goûter le plaisir de m'ouïr dire des douceurs.

NOTE B, p. 329.

The following beautiful passage on the pleasures of melancholy was written by Mme. Roland, at the age of seventeen. " Aimable et douce mélancolie, ma fidèle compagne, ne m'abandonne jamais entièrement ! Je te dois mes plaisirs, je connois tous tes charmes : le voile dont tu caches tes agrémens les fait méconnaître au vulgaire : tu les reserves pour tes favoris : que je sois toujours de ce nombre ! les biens que tu leur dispenses ne causent point de soucis, n'entraînent pas de remords. Si quelquefois tu t'éloignes un peu, que ce soit dans ces seuls momens où, rassemblés autour de nos foyers, dans la saison régoureuse, l'esprit aiguillonné par les folâtres enfans des jeux fait diversion à tes douceurs avec quelques amis : mais reviens promptement charmer la solitude et ravir nos cœurs." *Memoirs of Mme. Roland.*

NOTE C, p. 333.

The following are the words of Mme. Roland : " Avec cette sensibilité qui rend les impressions si profondes et qui fait être frappé de tant de choses, lesquelles passent comme des ombres devant le vulgaire, l'existence ne languit jamais ; aussi j'ai réfléchi la mienne de bonne heure, sans l'avoir encore trouvée à charge, même au milieu des plus rudes épreuves : et n'ayant point atteint quarante ans, j'ai prodigieusement vécu, si l'on compte la vie par le *sentiment* qui marque tous les instans de sa durée."



## BOOK II.

ON ETHICS, OR MORALS PROPERLY SO CALLED.







## BOOK II.

ON ETHICS, OR MORALS PROPERLY SO CALLED.

### PART I.

*On Speculative Morality, or the Theory of Moral Sentiment.*

#### CHAPTER I.—INTRODUCTION.

ETHICS, or Morals properly so called, is the science which treats of human duty. In the general introduction to Moral Science prefixed to the present Inquiry, we pointed out the relation which Ethics bears to other departments of human knowledge, and mentioned the first and leading division of this science, into speculative morality, or the theory of moral sentiment, and practical morality, or the rule of action. All those sciences which we called the mixed mental, or moral, are partly speculative, partly practical, and the one division so naturally runs into the other, that they are seldom kept quite separate ; for in treating of the thoughts, emotions, and actions of men *as they are*, we are constantly led to consider how *they ought to be*. Still it appears to me certain, that the confusion which has hitherto been so much remarked in systems of Ethics, and the diversity of opinions on the subject, may be traced, in a great degree, to an imperfect apprehension of

this grand and primary difference. Verbal disputes have also been very frequent, but if we avoid these, and state the question properly at the outset, we have reason to hope that the subject may be elucidated, seeing that it is one which not only lies within the compass of the human understanding, but is open to the reflection and experience of every man. Every one has not time or opportunity for watching and calculating the motions of the heavenly bodies, or analyzing the various substances that compose the earth ; but all may know something of what passes within them when they approve or disapprove of actions or characters, and may judge when praise or blame ought to be awarded. It has been said that a question well put is half solved, and if this be true generally, it applies with double force to the present subject, which has certainly been obscured from want of a proper statement at the opening of the investigation. If we succeed in this respect, we shall probably find that disputes as to the existence or non-existence of a moral sense, the prevalence of reason or of sentiment in morals, of sympathy or of utility, and other similar questions will be easily set at rest. In treating of speculative morality, we shall first consider the *nature* of the moral sentiments ; and secondly, the *causes* from which they spring : and in discussing practical morals, we shall in the first place determine the *purpose* which these sentiments seem to serve in the economy of human life, or the *effects* which they are meant to produce ; and afterwards the occasions on which they ought to arise in order to fulfil that purpose.

## CHAPTER II.

## ON THE NATURE OF THE MORAL SENTIMENTS.

HOWEVER great may be the scepticism of some men on all subjects, or on that of morals in particular, it is impossible to deny the existence of certain sentiments of approbation and disapprobation, considered merely as mental phenomena, and without any reference to their causes or their consequences. Disputes may arise on the real nature of these sentiments, on their origin, and on their effects; but these very disputes suppose that there is something real at the bottom of the controversy. Some may assert that the sentiments are simple, unsusceptible of analysis, others that they are compound; those may maintain that they are original instincts, common to the human race and uniform in all men, like the feelings of hunger and thirst; these that they are gradually acquired by experience of the consequences of actions, or caught from others, and may be modified or totally changed by custom and education. Most men suppose that the sentiments in question are of the utmost importance to human life and happiness, while a few have endeavoured to prove that they are irrational and useless, a mere artifice of crafty politicians. But amidst all this diversity of opinions, the reality of such sentiments has not been called in question. Here then we can take our stand



on secure ground, and begin by enquiring what may be the true nature of these mental phenomena.

When certain actions and certain dispositions are presented to our view, we feel within us a sentiment of approbation; when other actions and dispositions are brought before us we are conscious of disapprobation. Now the question is, what is the nature of these sentiments?

There seem to be only three opinions which either have been or can be formed upon this subject. Some may suppose the above sentiments to be merely decisions of the Judgment as to the tendency of actions or dispositions; others may consider them simply as feelings or emotions no more connected with reason than the emotions of beauty or sublimity; while a third class may think that in such sentiments reason and feeling are united. In this as in all metaphysical questions, our ultimate reference must be made to the experience of what passes within us when we approve or disapprove the conduct of ourselves or others. Let us see then what says that experience. When we receive any benefit or token of kindness from another, we naturally feel an emotion of goodwill towards the individual; and when on the other hand we experience any injury or affront, we as readily swell with indignation. In these cases the existence of feeling whether of love or hatred cannot be disputed. But if the benefit or injury in no wise concern ourselves what will be our state of mind? When we hear for instance of some signal act of virtue, as of a man who at the hazard of his life leaps into the waves to save a drowning fellow creature, or

when we listen to a tale of cruelty and injustice, are we then totally unmoved? Is that good or ill feeling so ready to arise in our own case, now totally dead? Do we sit coldly by, and in saying that the one has acted well the other ill, do we feel no more emotion than when we pronounce such an one a good or bad mathematician, or when we call sugar wholesome and hemlock poisonous? Each man's experience will prove to him the contrary. Every one is conscious of some inward emotion on hearing of these opposite actions, and the words he uses and his tone of voice declare the same to the by-standers. When he applies to particular cases those terms of approbation or disapprobation with which all languages abound, he gives them a peculiar emphasis that marks the feeling within, and is readily understood by others. The emotion may not be so strong as when our own interests are at stake, but it is nevertheless real, and in some cases even intense, as when we execrate the memory of tyrants who have enslaved and preyed upon mankind. Where, we may ask, would be the interest of tragedies and all tragic stories, did we not long for the success of the good and sigh for the discomfiture of the wicked? or why should orators heap epithet upon epithet and exhaust all the energy of language in praising or blaming individuals, did they not hope to kindle a flame in the breasts of their attentive auditors? We may therefore rest assured, that emotion of some kind or other is at least a part of moral approbation or disapprobation, though it may not constitute the whole. Nor will it be difficult to discover the nature of that emo-

tion. It seems to be exactly of the same kind as that which we experience when a benefit or injury is conferred upon ourselves, and is therefore some form of love or hatred, of good or ill-will. We cannot hear of any remarkable act of virtue or of vice without contemplating its author with some degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and without at least a temporary wish of good or evil towards him. This then is one essential element of moral sentiment.

Already we perceive the radical error of those who consider moral sentiment as a mere decision of the judgment. But has judgment no part in this state of mind? Are those sentiments with which we look upon virtue and vice in all respects the same as the love or hatred we bear to our friends or foes? When we approve or condemn any one, do we mean nothing more than that we like or dislike him? Surely every person must perceive that there is a real difference in the cases, and though he may not quite know where-in it lies, he in general sees very well that moral approbation is not mere love, nor moral disapprobation mere hatred, and that the numerous set of terms expressive of praise and blame mean something more than simple regard or enmity. What more then do they mean? As it is not emotion, it must be either thought or sensation, for under one or other of these heads, we have seen that all the mental phenomena are comprehended. And as the nature of the case excludes the latter, we must conclude that thought of some kind forms a part of moral sentiment. Now thoughts are of two sorts, simple and relative, the former being the bare perception or the conception

of an object, the latter the consciousness of a relation between two or more objects. But in expressing love or hatred towards any one as well as in approving or condemning any action or character, we of course must have a perception or a conception of the being loved or hated in the one case, of the act or disposition, in the other, and therefore, here there can be no ground of distinction between mere emotion and sentiment. There remains then only relative thoughts to establish a difference between them, and these are the province of reason. Therefore moral approbation or disapprobation is distinguished from mere love or hatred by the presence of a judgment as to the nature or tendency of actions and characters, and the union of these two constitutes moral sentiment.

To confirm this reasoning, we may appeal to the experience of each individual, for in examining his own state of mind when he applauds or condemns any action or character, is he not conscious of forming an opinion, as to the nature or tendency of such action or character, as well as of an emotion? At times, the judgment may be so rapid as almost to escape observation, as when the nature of the action admits of no doubt, and is really self-evident; and at other times the emotion may be so intense as to make us inattentive to the previous reasoning; but however instantaneous, or however quickly forgotten, a relation of cause and effect has certainly been perceived between some mental quality and its consequences. The more practised our judgment becomes, the more accustomed to see at once the nature and tendency of actions and dispositions, the less will the

rational process be manifest to ourselves, for in this as in other things, practice makes perfect, but deadens our consciousness. In common cases we decide at once without any hesitation or conflict of opposite views, and therefore the emotion seems to arise immediately, and agreeably to the nature of emotion, engrosses the mind more than the cool dictates of the understanding.

This view of the case is, moreover, corroborated by the universal sense of mankind in all ages and countries, as expressed in speech or in writing ; for in a matter of this nature, it is impossible to think that all men have been in error. It is often said that there is no disputing about taste, but no one ventures to assert that there is no disputing about right or wrong. Indeed, history, biography, pleadings in courts of justice, and common conversation, all abound in discussions as to the merit and demerit of individuals, and various are the opinions formed concerning them, and the sentiments expressed in accordance with those opinions. Some take up the defence of a character while others run him down, and in so doing they endeavour to analyse his actions, to trace the motives and disposition connected with them, so as to make them accord with their views, and influence the sentiments of others, and they always labour to inform the judgment as the medium through which they may create a good or a bad feeling. In order to work upon their readers or hearers, they do not think it enough to express their mere regard or dislike, but they consider themselves bound to assign the reasons for the one or the other, and address them-

selves to the understanding before they can hope to rouse any emotion, whether of love or hatred. In such cases the part that reason occupies in moral sentiment is quite apparent, and if it be not equally so in all, it is only because the case is often so clear that we make up our mind at once, and therefore are scarcely conscious of an act of judgment.

To avoid verbal controversies, I may remark, that some persons who in the main will agree in the above views, may nevertheless, be unwilling to give the name of moral sentiment to any thing but the final feeling which belongs to moral approbation and disapprobation. With these I shall not pretend to dispute, provided they allow that a judgment immediately precedes the feeling, and is intimately connected with it; though in common language the word *sentiment* generally implies more than mere emotion, and seems well adapted to express a state of mind compounded of a judgment and a feeling, uniting the coolness of the one with the warmth of the other.

Here it is necessary to call to mind a distinction already alluded to in the first Book of this Inquiry, but which peculiarly applies to our present subject. We remarked that there are three states of mind, Love or Affection, Admiration, and Esteem, not unfrequently confounded, and passing gradually the one into the other, while, nevertheless, they are really different. Love is simply an Emotion; Admiration and Esteem both imply an exercise of Judgment, combined with a degree of emotion; but in the former compound, feeling is more prominent than in the latter. Thus Admiration is a state of transition be-

tween Love and Esteem, being neither so warm as the one nor so cool as the other. Now, as Esteem is only another term for moral approbation, it becomes necessary to attend to this distinction in all ethical enquiries, for if we confound Esteem with Love, or with Admiration, we shall be led into serious error.<sup>1</sup> Though the two latter do not constitute moral sentiment, they have an immense influence upon it, and we shall afterwards see that they sometimes pervert it altogether. The proper object of Love is the agreeable ; of Admiration, the great ; of Esteem, the good or virtuous ; but when our affections are too much engaged by agreeable qualities, or our imagination captivated by splendid talents, we are apt to dignify vice by the name of Virtue.

If the analysis above given be correct, it follows that Ethics belong neither to Reason alone nor to Feeling alone, but that these two go hand in hand in all moral decisions, and therefore must be attended to by all moral philosophers. And if we allow that our sentiments of approbation and disapprobation are real, and that in most cases they arise immediately on contemplating certain actions and characters, we cannot dispute the existence of a Moral Sense, for this means nothing more than a ready susceptibility to

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<sup>1</sup> It appears to me that some of the principal mistakes of Hume in his moral writings, particularly in the third Book of his *Treatise of Human Nature*, arise from his not distinguishing between the three states of mind above mentioned. Though the *Treatise of Human Nature* was afterwards disowned by its author as a juvenile performance, yet it is considered by some, as by Stewart and Mackintosh, the best of his philosophical works.

such sentiments ; and we might as well deny that a man capable of reasoning has reason, as that one susceptible of moral Sentiments has a moral sense. In both cases the terms are merely general expressions comprehending many particular phenomena, and there can no more be Reason without particular reasonings than there can be a Moral Sense without individual sentiments of approbation and disapprobation. The same may be said of Conscience, which is another term for the Moral Sense when applied to our own character and actions. As no one doubts the existence of conscience, so no one ought to doubt the existence of a Moral Sense applicable to others as well as to self. And as the latter is merely a general term for all our moral Sentiments, so Conscience is a common expression for innumerable particular instances of self-approval or disapproval. In a word, if a man arrived at years of discretion immediately approve or disapprove certain actions or dispositions, then has he a Moral Sense, and if the actions or disposition be his own, then he has a Conscience.<sup>2</sup> But such is the influence of abstract terms, and of figurative language on philosophy, that conscience has been raised into a sort of

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<sup>2</sup> The phrase *moral sense* seems to have been derived by analogy from the five ordinary senses, and it might imply that the moral Sentiments arise as immediately on fit occasions, as the sensations of touch, sight, hearing, smell, and taste, on the presence of their proper objects. As expressive of a mere fact, the rapid application of our moral sentiments to particular cases, the phrase must be considered a happy one ; though it has often been supposed to imply a theory as to the origin of those Sentiments. The reader will observe that it is here used only to express a fact obvious to common experience.



independent being, a monitor or supreme judge, distinct as it were from the mind itself, or from any particular state of it, and issuing its mandates like a monarch from an earthly throne. One would think that the slightest observation might suffice to show that these are mere figures of speech, and that conscience can have no existence distinct from the individual sentiments of which it is composed. And if these sentiments be in general a sure guide, what more can we require? Would we treat Conscience like an eastern potentate, who must be approached as a divinity, and addressed by swelling titles in order to secure respect? In philosophy at least, simplicity and truth ought always to be our first care.

A good deal has been said by Butler, and other moralists, on what they call the Natural Supremacy of Conscience. Now what are we to understand by this? If the word supreme be taken in any sense similar to the usual, and be employed to express a fact, then it is evident that conscience is *not* supreme, for its mandates are very often disobeyed, nay by long practice of vice, they may be nearly silenced. But if it be meant merely that conscience *ought* to be supreme, or in more simple language that a man *ought* never to act against his conscience, this indeed is a truth, but it is one which nobody calls in question. Certainly it is no *discovery* in morals. It is only an allowed truth expressed in pompous language.

Though I have said that in the case of a man arrived at years of discretion, the moral sentiments generally arise immediately, on the proper occasions; yet, the question remains entire, how do these sen-

timents at first spring up? The existence of a Moral Sense as above explained, seems to me as indisputable as the existence of Memory or Reason, but we have yet to know whether that faculty be original or derived, instinctive or acquired, and how far, and by what causes, it may be changed or modified. This will form the subject of the following chapter.

## CHAPTER III.

## ON THE CAUSES OF THE MORAL SENTIMENTS.

SECTION I.—*On the Origin of the Moral Sentiments.*

THE question to be discussed in the present Section may be thus stated: whether our moral sentiments be original and instinctive; or be derived from other known principles of human nature, and gradually acquired.

It may be thought by some that this question was put beyond dispute when we allowed that, in the case of an individual arrived at years of discretion, the moral sentiments generally arise immediately, on their proper occasions; or, in other words, that the moral sense is for the most part quick and susceptible. But how little we are justified in concluding that the moral sense is an original faculty because, in our mature state, it acts with great rapidity, will be manifest from the following analogy. Nothing can appear more instantaneous than our perceptions by the eye, of the magnitude, figure, and distances of objects when not too remote; but yet it is now well known that these perceptions are not instinctive, but acquired, and that, in truth, we learn to see. This great discovery had been anticipated by Berkeley in his *New Theory of Vision*, from reasoning *a priori*, and was confirmed by direct experience on persons born blind and afterwards gifted with sight; in particular

by an operation on a lad performed by the celebrated Cheselden. It was then proved that a person with his visual organs in a perfectly sound state would have no notion, prior to experience, of the magnitude, figure, or distance of objects, but would see all things close to his eye ; as seems to be the case with young children, who are long of stretching out their hands far enough to lay hold on anything. The sense of touch is thus shown to be necessary to teach us how to see ; nor is it till after repeated associations between touch and sight, that the latter at once suggests to us the proper form and position of objects. Between this and our present case the analogy is perfect ; for as the instantaneous vision of any one above infancy is no proof that the faculty is instinctive, so the quickness of the moral sense in the mature mind does not show that it is original.

Having dismissed the above argument in favour of the originality of our moral sentiments, which meets us at the threshold of our inquiry, we may remark, that the analysis given in the previous Chapter leads us to a proof of the contrary. Since we have seen that those sentiments are not simple, but made up of a judgment and a feeling, it seems natural to infer, that the compound is derived from the elements, and that reason and a susceptibility to emotion must have preceded the moral sense. But in order to see this more clearly, let us consider the particular nature of the emotion connected with moral sentiment.

We have remarked, that the emotion in question is a modification of the general passion of love or hatred ; and consequently, in order to trace the origin

of our moral sentiments, we must trace the origin of those passions. The general cause of love or hatred is some pleasure or pain which we receive from a voluntary agent, whether by intention or otherwise; for though this makes a great difference in the degree of passion excited, it is not essential to its existence. As we often love persons who have never done us any favour or shewn us any marked attention, so we frequently dislike those who have neither meant to injure nor slight us. To rouse our good or ill-will towards them, it is enough that they have caused us pleasure or pain; and though the feeling may be afterwards modified by reflecting that the pleasure or pain was unintentional, the emotion being once roused, it is not so easily subdued. Now there are two ways in which men may please or displease us, directly, or indirectly, either by their actions which immediately affect ourselves, or by their conduct towards others with whom we have a sympathy. As, in general, we feel everything more keenly which immediately touches ourselves, so the corresponding passions are more lively; unless dear friends be concerned, whose happiness and misery are almost as our own. Indeed, so intense is our love or our hatred towards any one who has benefited or injured ourselves or friends, that the emotion often perverts our reason, and overpowers the moral sentiments. We always make allowance for the keenness of this feeling when we listen to the sentiments of others in their own case, and regard them little, because they are warped by passion. It is not, therefore, in the love or hatred arising from causes peculiar to ourselves

or friends that we can look for the origin of moral sentiment, or the sense of right and wrong. Besides, we are constantly approving or disapproving of actions and characters in which we have no private interest whatsoever, and can praise or blame the conduct of persons living in distant parts of the world, or who died long before we were born. What is there in the actions of Cato or of Cæsar that can possibly affect the interests of any man now existing? but who does not approve the one and condemn the other? Can any Englishman say that he feels to have been benefited by Washington? but does any deny that he was the most virtuous of men? Therefore our moral sentiments are independent of private benefit or injury; and to discover whence they spring, we must look for some principle of general application. Such is the principle of sympathy. Man is framed to “rejoice with those that do rejoice, and weep with those that weep,” whether the objects of his sympathy be acquaintances or strangers, countrymen or foreigners, living or dead. And feeling, as he does by reflexion, the happiness and misery of others as if they were his own, he naturally loves or hates those who have been a cause of benefit or injury to their fellow-creatures.

But we approve or condemn not only those who benefit or injure others, but also those who benefit or injure themselves. Here the good or evil being confined to the individual in question, it is, if possible, still more clear than in the former case, that private interest has nothing to do with that love or hatred which gives rise to moral approbation or disapproba-

tion. We are told of some person, perhaps long since dead, or now living in some distant part of the world, and no way connected with us, who has brought upon himself many and great calamities. On hearing of these calamities our first feeling may be pity; but when we reflect that they are his own doing, our emotion changes into indignation, which soon terminates in moral disapproval. Here is an example where sympathy produces two totally different effects. In the first instance, and while dwelling only on the misfortunes of a fellow-creature, without any reference to the cause, we are grieved on his account, and hence wish to relieve his sufferings; but afterwards, when we consider that he might have avoided them had he pleased, the pain which we still feel rouses indignation against the author of those ills which become our own by sympathy. It is evident that in this case it is reason, or reflection on causes and circumstances, that changes the first movement of pity, which is akin to love, into an emotion diametrically opposite, and leads us on to a sentiment of moral disapprobation; for if we heard any one expressing pity for the object, we should be apt to say, pity him not, for it is all his own fault; or, he has only himself to blame.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Even when we attach no blame to the sufferer, or have no private enmity or envy, pity does not always arise on witnessing the calamities of others. Sometimes another emotion springs up instantaneously, and so engrosses the mind as completely to expel the tender feelings. Thus, the sight of a beggar covered with sores may excite so strong a disgust as not only to exclude pity, but even to rouse our anger against the wretched object, who by

Since general sympathy is not so acute as our selfish feelings, or our private sympathy, therefore in this case reason can be the more attended to. Now without reason it is often impossible to know whether a benefit or injury has, or has not been caused, and especially whether it was intentional, or could have been avoided; and consequently reason comes in as the guide of general sympathy, checking or encouraging it according to circumstances. Without sympathy, reason might indeed point out the tendency of actions and dispositions, and show that some were useful, others injurious to men; but what should we care for that, if our private interests were not affected? We might indeed call some actions beneficial, others hurtful; but as we could feel no more in the one case than in the other, we should neither approve nor disapprove. Impassive spectators of the conduct of all placed beyond our narrow circle, we might employ our intellect in speculating upon their actions; but we should

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placing himself in our way has given us such uneasiness. So, folly, though an undoubted evil, and often free from all moral turpitude, rouses contempt more frequently than pity. This is an interesting subject; but were we to pursue it further, it might lead us too far from our main inquiry. The reason why many, the proud especially, so much dislike to be pitied is, that pity supposes inferiority, and though certainly very different from contempt, yet the causes which excite the two are nearly allied. Nay, it would seem that the same causes may in some create pity, in others contempt, according to the nature of the mind they act upon. In contempt there is a mixture of pride, and consequently the proud are prone to that emotion. Hence one evil of pride, that it often leads us to despise, where we ought to pity, and if possible relieve our fellow-creatures.



be quite indifferent as to whether they were bad or good, and totally unconscious of moral sentiment. On the other hand, were sympathy left to itself, it would be as capricious as our other emotions; and when expressed in words, could signify nothing more than our likings or our dislikes, which no one considers as a sufficient guide in life. We may allow a man to say that he likes or dislikes another without assigning any reason; but we always think him bound to tell why he approves or disapproves. Without the corrector, Reason, sympathy would run wild, and instead of one uniform code of morals, we should have the varying whims of individuals; but when the two are united, the natural feelings of our nature receive a proper direction. In short, take away sympathy, and man has no feeling for his fellow-creatures; banish reason, and feeling has no guide; and in either case, there are no morals. Thus it appears that our moral sentiments are derived from Sympathy and Reason.

Having arrived at the above conclusion by reasoning from the constituent elements of moral sentiment as traced in the preceding chapter, we must now pursue a different course, and by consulting direct experience as to those dispositions of mind which we approve or disapprove, we shall either confirm or invalidate the previous theory. Let us then consider the nature of those mental qualities which meet with our applause or condemnation.

The mental qualities which call up moral approbation are usually denominated virtues, and these are commonly divided into virtues relating to others, and

those which regard self. Numerous are the modifications which these qualities assume, and great the variety of terms used in consequence ; but those of the first class may be all included under two general heads, Justice, and active Benevolence ; while those of the second may be summed up under Temperance, Constancy, Courage, and Fortitude, or active and passive courage.

To begin with justice ; it is evident that this virtue is absolutely essential not only to the well-being, but to the very existence of man in society ; for without it there would be universal war between the aggressor and the aggrieved, as long as society lasted, till at length man would fly from his fellows, and prefer solitude in the woods to perpetual conflict or perpetual fear. The whole body of laws, civil as well as criminal, is instituted for the maintenance of justice ; for it is not only the most indispensable of virtues, but the only one that can be brought within definite rules. Where justice is insufficient, there active benevolence steps in ; and surely it is unnecessary to prove that benevolence conduces to the happiness of our fellow-creatures. And here I may remark, that justice is but a modification of benevolence. The object of both is the same, the well-being of mankind ; though the means employed may be different. Justice is long-sighted, and often causes partial evil in order to secure a greater good ; as when it condemns a criminal to death or some other punishment. To the individual the evil is not the less real because he is a criminal, nay, in a religious point of view it is greater, because he is less prepared to die, and meet his final

judgment. But when we are told that his doom is necessary to deter others from similar enormities; though we may still pity the sufferer, we acknowledge the justice of his sentence. Simple benevolence, on the other hand, is not of so calculating a nature, but looks to a more immediate good; and were we to trust to it alone, we should often approve acts in reality injurious to society. One man for instance is over-burthened with riches, and makes a very bad use of them, while another is in the utmost want: what then more natural or apparently more agreeable to benevolence than to take a little from the former, which might never be missed, and give it to the latter? Here, however, justice interferes, and informs us, that whatever good we might do in this or other such instances, it would be prodigiously overbalanced by the bad effect of an example, which would certainly be followed in cases very different, and at the least would create a general feeling of insecurity. Therefore benevolence must resign itself to see the bad man rich and the good poor, unless it can relieve him out of its own store.

It has been thought by some that justice depends upon the institution of property; but these reverse the order of things, for in reality property depends upon justice; though the idea of the one is quite as natural to man, and as inevitable, as that of the other. This it is well to show, were it only to silence those enthusiasts, who every now and then appear, and attempt to raise a clamour against the institution of property, as if it were a mere artifice of crafty politicians for preserving an inequality of con-

ditions, though injurious to the happiness of the species. But long before the existence of a regularly organized society; or the rise of government and laws, the notions of justice, and thence of property, were known to uncultivated man. The Savage who had cut down a tree, and employed his labour in forming it into a canoe, or into implements for war or chase, would certainly regard this canoe or these implements as his own, and would feel exceedingly indignant against any one who should dispute his right of possession. Nor can we doubt that his brother savages, not personally interested, would join in his indignation, would pronounce his cause to be just, the other's unjust, and would say that the former had a right to the exclusive use of the object. Thus the notion of property arises as naturally and as necessarily in the mind of man as that of justice; but without a previous idea of the latter he never could have known the former. Here is a piece of wood formed into a canoe or implements, by the labour and skill of one man. So long as he continues undisturbed in using these objects, the idea of property may never arise in his mind; whence then his indignation, and more especially that of disinterested spectators, when another endeavours to seize them? The notion of property does then certainly suggest itself; but what does this imply? It does not suppose merely that the individual in question has fashioned the objects solely by his own labour, and that hitherto he has used them to the exclusion of all others. These considerations indeed, will suggest themselves to the party himself as well as to the by-standers, but still

there is here no notion of property. By this is meant that one man has a *right* of exclusive enjoyment. But before such a sentence can be pronounced either mentally or in words, it is clear that some idea of *right* must previously have been formed, or in other terms an idea of just and unjust. The notion of property is complex, embracing an idea of right as well as of exclusive use ; and without a previous notion of the elements, how could we have conceived the compound ?

An attack upon property is only one way in which justice may be violated, for it may be equally so by an assault upon the person, or a libel upon the reputation of an individual, and even, in some cases, by robbing him of the affections of others. Therefore, it gives a very imperfect idea of the object of civil government to say, as some have said, that it was instituted for the safety of property ; but it is more correct to affirm, that it was established for the maintenance of justice in general. No doubt there are other and secondary objects which government may keep in view ; but the observance of justice is the grand and paramount end for which it was first appointed, and ever afterwards submitted to. And the reason why this virtue was singled out from all the rest, to be especially protected by government, is not only that it is the most indispensable, but also the only one that can be reduced to definite rules. And even here rules very often fail, for never yet has there been framed a code of laws which could comprehend all possible cases, without leaving a certain latitude to those who were bound to apply them. In England,

the whole of common law consists in the precedents of judges ; and even where a code has been formed, the glosses of lawyers have soon exceeded the test.

When we turn to the virtues which regard self, who does not see that Temperance is necessary to maintain our health of body as well as our health of mind, both of which are impaired and prematurely worn out by excesses ? Constancy again is essential to success in any of our own undertakings, as well as to the happiness of those around us, who are tormented by our levity and indecision, the hopes of one day being blasted by the next. And as to Courage, this is not only useful for self-defence, and for maintaining that presence of mind which on all occasions is the best preservative against danger, but it is also indispensable to our peace of mind ; for nothing is so lamentable as a state of continual fear. No doubt, courage may lead us into peril as well as guard us against it ; but then it changes its appellation, and instead of being applauded, is condemned under the name of rashness. Fortitude, on the other hand, or passive courage, enables us to support, and in so doing lessens all the ills of life ; for fortitude occupies and rouses the mind, and prevents it being totally absorbed and broken by calamity.

If there be any virtues not comprehended under the above, let us pass them in review, and say whether we can find one which is useless to ourselves or others. But this task has been so thoroughly performed by Hume, in his *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, that it is unnecessary to go through it here. Indeed, the very idea of a virtue

that is useless, or a vice that is harmless, seems an evident absurdity, such as no one of ordinary sense, uncorrupted by sophistical reasoning, could ever seriously entertain. What should we think of a moral quality highly laudable, but utterly useless, or one perfectly harmless, but worthy of all condemnation? We might almost as well call white black, or sweet bitter, so evident is the contradiction.

From the view above taken of the leading qualities that command our moral approbation, from the more elaborate induction of Hume, and also from attending to the simple dictates of common sense, it will probably then be allowed that all the virtues are useful and all the vices injurious, either to the individual himself or those with whom he is connected.

Having arrived at this conclusion, that UTILITY is an essential element of those mental qualities which meet with our moral approbation, does it not seem natural to conclude that the view of this utility is a source of moral sentiment? Is it possible to conceive that all men in all ages have applauded useful dispositions, without thinking of their utility? Strange as it may appear, moralists there have been who maintained this very unpromising proposition; who allowed all the virtues to be useful, but denied that we *therefore* approve them. This I must be permitted to call an extraordinary instance of philosophical perverseness. What should we think of a man who could deny that Washington acted from patriotism, or that Howard was moved by benevolence? He might say that, no doubt, appearances were to that effect, but appearances are highly deceitful; and

since no one could dive into the breasts of those persons, it was possible that self-regarding interest lay at the bottom of all, which by a happy chance took a direction useful to the public. This might be said; but who, I would ask, could listen for a moment to such reasoning? What then shall we say of those philosophers who pretend that men generally, if not universally, by word, deed, look, and gesture, express their approbation of useful qualities, and their disapprobation of injurious, without having utility in view? Like the sceptic just mentioned, they might indeed say, that appearances were certainly against their opinion, but that these not being decisive, the minds of men must be laid open before they could be convinced to the contrary. As far as those minds can be laid open, they undoubtedly are by means of words, tones, looks, and actions, for in praising any one, or assigning a reason for doing him any service, are we not wont to dwell on the good he has done to his family, his friends, his countrymen, or all mankind, on the happiness he has diffused around him? And in loading another with obloquy, or expressing our unwillingness to assist him, do we not dilate on the evil he has brought on himself or others? Therefore the experience of every day proves, that in approving or disapproving, we really have an eye to utility.

Were any one to dispute with us concerning the claims of Howard to our warmest approbation, how should we attempt to answer him, but by showing the great good he had done, or at least had attempted to do, and the numerous labours and hardships he



had undergone in pursuit of his benevolent purpose of improving the condition of prisoners? Can any form of speech give us a higher idea of the inimitable excellence of our Saviour than these simple words, that he went about doing good? His whole life was spent in relieving suffering, and do we not approve his character in consequence? When the first Cosmo de' Medici returned from banishment, was he not greeted enthusiastically by his countrymen, and called the father of his country? and why? because he had been its benefactor.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, do not our hearts swell with righteous indignation on reading of the miseries brought upon the great and good by those sanguinary tyrants who first ruled the Roman empire? and why were they called tyrants, if not for their inhumanity? Again, when we consider an individual who has fallen into great misfortunes, solely by his own misconduct, by imprudence, rashness, or presumption, as Crassus, the first in riches, and third in influence, at Rome, who afterwards perished miserably in Mesopotamia; do we not blame him for ruining himself and others? Finally, if it be granted that utility is an element common to all those mental qualities which we morally approve, it is impossible to evade the inference that the perception of that utility is at least one cause of moral sentiment.

Here I may remark, that many may have been de-

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<sup>2</sup> “E da ciascuno volontariamente fu salutato il benefattore del popolo e Padre della patria.”

*Machiavelli Istor. Fior.* Lib. iv.

tered from adopting this conclusion by supposing that it is thereby asserted that we can never approve or disapprove without a clear view of utility. But this is by no means maintained, but only that utility is an original source of moral sentiment, a cause that serves to account for the first growth of such sentiment among men, and which is never long forgotten, though it may not be constantly in mind. What those causes are which *afterwards* act upon us, and enable moral sentiments to arise with a promptitude that almost precludes reflexion, we shall see in the following Section ; but those causes are subsequent and secondary, not original and primary. As a man having a grand object before him may be so engaged with the necessary details and preliminaries as to lose sight of his end for a while, but always turns to it again as to a fixed beacon, so, amid the bustle of the world, men may forget utility, but they are still within the sphere of its attraction. Not more surely does the needle point to the pole, than the mind to that moral loadstone.

From the above facts and reasonings, it may now be considered as proved that a view of utility is certainly one source of moral sentiment. But it may still be asked, why does utility affect us? Where our own interests are at stake, our attachment to the useful can be easily understood ; but we have seen that we approve and disapprove in innumerable instances where we are no way personally concerned. In such cases, utility can influence our moral sentiments only through our general sympathy with the happiness or misery of our fellow-creatures. Without

that sympathy, we might still discern the utility, but it could not influence our feelings, and therefore could not excite any moral sentiment, which necessarily comprises some emotion. We might say that such an action or disposition was useful or injurious, but we should neither praise the one nor blame the other, nor pronounce it meritorious or culpable, virtuous or vicious. Where our own interests were affected by certain actions, we should still feel gratitude for benefit and indignation for injury, but we should not say that such actions were morally right or wrong; or, if we used the same words, neither ourselves nor any one else would understand anything more by them than that we had received pleasure or pain from some one, and felt grateful or angry in consequence. In short, without the principle of sympathy, which binds us to all mankind, we should still indeed feel love for our private friends and hatred for our enemies; but neither love nor hatred for the benefactors or scourges of mankind, and therefore we should neither approve the one nor condemn the other. Now, in order to discern utility, reason is required, in a greater or less degree. In many cases, plain common sense is sufficient to determine the nature of actions, as when a man, without provocation, murders his neighbour and seizes on his goods. The injurious tendency of such deeds no sane man can mistake; but other cases are more complicated, as the one mentioned formerly where a poor, needy, and in general a good man purloins some of the superfluous wealth of his worthless fellow-citizen. Here, first impressions are not sufficient, but distant consequences must be taken into

account, and opposite inconveniences balanced, before we can safely decide for or against the utility of such practices. But when men by reasoning have made up their minds thereupon, the decision is chronicled, and becomes a general rule to be referred to on future occasions, and prevent the necessity of constantly debating the subject.

Other cases being still less clear, they require a greater exercise of reason, and therefore, as we might suppose, the decision is not so uniform. All nations have perceived that the intercourse between the sexes must be put under some restraints and regulations, but these have not always been the same, for in some countries polygamy is permitted, in others not; here marriage may be broken, there it is indissoluble; and as the variety in practice, so is the variety in moral sentiment. Other similar cases have been mentioned in the general introduction; as well as the great acts of suicide and tyrannicide, which have been alternately approved and condemned. In such instances it is impossible to account for the difference of sentiment, otherwise than by the difference of opinion as to the utility of this or that practice, and opinion is the result of reason.

We have now consulted our experience of those mental qualities which men approve or disapprove, in order to discover the origin of moral sentiments, and by so doing have arrived at the same conclusion which we previously came to, by a deduction from the nature of these sentiments as known to us by analysis. Both these methods of inquiry having shown us that moral sentiment springs from Sympathy

guided by Reason, the proof must be considered complete, for besides the separate proof which each mode of investigation affords, the one corroborates the other, and the whole swells by accumulation.

The general uniformity, and the occasional diversity of moral sentiment, are readily accounted for on the foregoing theory, when we consider that the useful or injurious tendency of most actions is obvious to common sense, while that of a few only is doubtful, and must be traced by deeper reflections, which may not always lead to the same result. But that diversity can by no means be accounted for on the supposition that moral sentiment is instinctive, for then like other instincts it ought to be always the same ; as the instinct of bees, or of beavers, that leads them to form hexagonal cells, or to construct their curious habitations, always upon one pattern. Here is a marked distinction between the instinctive and the acquired, that the one is ever uniform, while the other admits of variety. Desire of pleasure and fear of pain, love or hatred, regard or dislike, towards those who please or displease us, a sense of uneasiness in the absence of food or drink, are instinctive feelings, which arise uniformly in all men ; but all are not gratified or hurt exactly by the same objects, or in the same way, nor do all like the same kinds of food. Though some things seem originally pleasant or unpleasant to all, as sweet or bitter to children ; yet other tastes are acquired, and what at first was disagreeable may in time be highly relished. Here custom, opportunity, and association may do a great deal, but they cannot change our instincts, make us seek pain or avoid

pleasure, hate those who please us, or love such as we find disagreeable. Sympathy with the weal and woe of others, which lies at the bottom of morals, is also an instinct of nature ; and so we may call that degree of common sense that belongs to all sane men, and which sees instinctively the consequences of certain actions. So far then there is a perfect uniformity among mankind ; but when cultivated reason is necessary to trace less palpable effects, then as in other instances of acquired faculties or talents, we meet with a considerable diversity, and according to the difference of views is the variety of moral sentiment.

Were moral sentiment instinctive, and hence uniform and infallible, what, we may ask, would be the object of those treatises and discourses on practical morality which every where abound ? Many of those works, and many oral harangues, public as well as private, profess not only to *enforce*, but also to *teach* morality. For instance, in that well known work, *The Internal Excellence of Christianity*, by Soame Jenyns, the author endeavours to show that many mental qualities which were highly approved of by the pagans, are no virtues at all, and ought not to be commended ; while others overlooked or despised by them are really worthy of applause. It would be beside my purpose to enquire how far he has made out his point ; for all I have to ask is, whether this and other works professing to enlighten men as to their practical duties, bear upon them an evident stamp of absurdity ? It will be allowed that the Christian religion enforces morality by a higher sanction ; but is it utterly false, and even ridiculous to suppose, that

it taught a purer code? Such, however, is the conclusion we must come to, if it be asserted that we have within us an instinct which can never err. All the writings and all the conversations of practical moralists, nay, all the lessons of our Saviour, must be considered as thrown away, so far as they profess to enlighten and not merely to exhort. But should it be said that any instinct, and conscience among the rest, might be reformed by a divine instructor, I would limit myself to mortals, and inquire whether all who pretend to teach us our duty, must be considered as presumptuous fools? for such they must be if they profess to teach what every one cannot but know. Unless this be affirmed, I must suppose that moral doctors may have been men of sense, and may have done some good in pointing out the right way; and consequently that conscience or the moral sense is not instinctive and uniform, nor an infallible monitor and guide.

It is now time to observe that the above facts and reasonings prove only that utility, as *discerned* by reason and *felt* by sympathy, is one source of moral sentiment. But if it were the sole source it would follow, not only that utility is an element common to all mental qualities which we morally approve, but also that we morally approve all useful qualities, and that too in proportion to their utility. Is this then the case? In order to determine the point let us consult experience.

It will generally be allowed that the two principles of self-love and social are necessary to the welfare of man in the present life; for without the one he

would be selfish even to savageness, without the other, generous even to folly. But were we obliged to make a choice between them, and say which is the most indispensable, we should be obliged to pronounce in favour of self-love, for this is absolutely essential to the existence and preservation of man, while the other is necessary only to his well-being. Were benevolence banished from the world, we might still have a system of laws, which by appealing to self-interest alone, as all penal laws now do, could restrain the more heinous offences against life and property; and education might perhaps be so spread, and general intelligence so improved, that every man should see that it was contrary to his interest to injure any one. This, I say, is conceivable, and at any rate the world would go on, though certainly much worse than before: but what would become of mankind were they wholly given up to benevolence, to the exclusion of self-regard? On this supposition, every one would be consulting for others, nobody for self; but as it is perfectly evident that no one can know his own wants so well as the individual himself, and no one else can be ever at hand to relieve them, people would die off from neglect until the race was extinct. What may be the case in a higher state of being, where the wants of man may not be so imperious as in the present, it would be presumptuous to say; but in a life such as this, surrounded every moment with danger, and requiring support continually, nothing but an ever-present and ever-wakeful regard to his own interest can maintain the existence of man.

Thus it evidently appears that self-love is a more



useful principle than benevolence. If then our moral sentiments be in proportion to utility, it should follow that in general we ought to approve actions where self-interest is the motive more than those which spring from the principle of benevolence. But far from this, there are innumerable acts which every one must allow to be highly useful to the individual, but which are never applauded at all. Who would think of approving a man for eating when he wanted food, for taking wholesome exercise, or resting when he was weary, though these be most useful doings? Would it be thought great praise to say of a man that in every action of his life he had a steady regard to his own advancement, though thus he were likely to succeed? Besides, even in the case of those mental qualities and those actions having a reference to self which are generally allowed to be praiseworthy or virtuous, and are certainly most useful, our moral approbation is often weak.

Of all the virtues there is certainly none more essential to happiness than prudence or discretion. That no talents however brilliant, no qualities however agreeable, no temper however generous, can make up for the want of this common-place virtue, is evident from the memorable instance of the great Sheridan, who in spite of all these advantages, by which he had charmed and astonished his countrymen, and acquired the friendship of the high and mighty, lived long as a mendicant, and ended his days in wretchedness. Prudence must then be considered the most indispensable of qualities; but it is never warmly commended, and some have even denied that

it was at all a virtue.<sup>3</sup> But this, as has been well observed by Mackintosh, is an assertion contradicted by every man's feelings; though the degree of approbation which we bestow on prudence is assuredly much fainter than that which we confer on charity. One who in all his dealings is guided by discretion may be approved as a prudent man; but he who embraces difficulty and danger in order to save his country, or succour his fellow-creatures in general, is hailed as a patriot and hero, is blest by his contemporaries, and admired by all posterity.

These instances may suffice to show that moral approbation is not in proportion to utility; and if so, this cannot be the only source of moral sentiment. Nor does the theory above given necessarily suppose that it is, but only that it is *one* source; and therefore that theory is not disproved, but merely shown to be incomplete. It remains then to be seen what other principle lies at the bottom of moral sentiment.

No fact in human nature appears more indisputable than our admiration for what is rare and great, and if great, therefore rare. We have before remarked that Admiration seems to occupy a middle place between Love and Esteem, combining the warmth of

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<sup>3</sup> "The object of moral approbation, according to Hutcheson, is general benevolence; and he carries this generous error so far as to deny that prudence, as long as it regards ourselves, can be morally approved;—an assertion contradicted by every man's feelings, and to which we owe the dissertation on the nature of virtue, which Butler annexed to his *analogy*." Mackintosh; Dissertation on the progress of Ethical Philosophy, Art. Hutcheson.

the one with something of the cool judgment of the other. In one respect, however, admiration differs materially from both, for it comprehends an emotion of Wonder at something new, rare, or unexpected. This appears to form an essential element of that compound state of mind, which, when excited by a being like ourselves, also embraces love, as well as a decision of the judgment as to the excellence of the object. The union of these three constitutes admiration for beauty, talents, or high moral worth. But when the term is applied to inanimate objects, the feelings must of course be somewhat different, for here proper Love is impossible; though the emotion is as nearly allied to it as the nature of the case can admit; while Wonder is still the same.

Now, whatever is unexpected excites our wonder, and whatever is unexpected is rare, relatively if not absolutely. Therefore Rarity is the proper source of wonder, and Greatness so far as rare; and hence both tend to rouse admiration, of which wonder is one element.

That the value we put upon things depends very much on their rarity, nobody will deny. So much indeed is this the case, that an object even of the most trifling utility, or beauty, may be highly prized and highly paid for, if it be known to be scarce. Gold and silver certainly possess many excellent qualities, particularly indestructibility by ordinary causes, such as corrode or liquify other metals; but will any one pretend that we should admire them as much as we do, were they as abundant as iron? Nay, one of their great advantages as money, depends

upon their scarcity, for were they as plentiful as other metals, they would be far too bulky for a circulating medium. As it is, gold has an advantage in this particular, which in certain countries is paid for accordingly. In France, where silver is the standard, and paper money almost unknown, the bulk and weight of the money is a real inconvenience.

Though gold and silver really possess useful qualities, can we say as much of those numerous trinkets and gewgaws which in civilized society are so highly valued? The art of imitation is now carried so far that mock precious stones and even diamonds can be fabricated almost if not quite as beautiful as the real; but when we know them to be mock we do not so much admire them. Many of those productions which are brought from India or China are really no better than our own, and in beauty of drawing are certainly very inferior, but they come from a distance and are rare, and therefore are more esteemed. The exchangeable value, in money or commodities, of any object of wealth which cannot be increased by human labour, depends upon scarcity alone; and the amount which people are willing to give in exchange for such an object, may be considered as a material measure of their mental appreciation.

Nor is our admiration of the rare confined to things inanimate, but is still more warmly felt for the mental and bodily qualities of living objects, particularly of our fellow-creatures. It is certainly necessary that those qualities should imply some intrinsic excellence of utility or of beauty, for otherwise they could not affect us at all, or would rouse an op-

posite feeling. Possessing then utility or beauty, our admiration of such qualities varies with their rarity.

We may now see what that principle is, which, along with the principle of utility, determines our moral sentiments. This is nothing else than a tendency to Wonder, and hence to Admiration, on the view or conception of rare moral qualities, rare in their nature or only in degree. Nothing can excite this admiration which is not intrinsically useful or beautiful, but the admiration is not in proportion to the utility, though it may be to the beauty, which varies according as it is *felt*. Hence it is neither prudence, nor frugality, nor temperance, nor even justice, which we most warmly admire, though these virtues be inferior to none in utility ; but extraordinary acts of benevolence, whether in the form of patriotism or of general philanthropy, acts which suppose uncommon self-sacrifice or self-denial. Who, for instance, can read the life of Cato of Utica, without the most unbounded admiration for a man directed by the perpetual wish of doing good to his country and all around him, and who in pursuit of that object could submit to any hardship, brave any danger, and resist to the last the mighty Cæsar ? In modern days, the life of Washington, and even the life of La Fayette, are not unworthy to be compared with that of Cato ; for though La Fayette was gifted with less talent, yet his virtue was as remarkable ; since he lived in times as difficult, and resisted every allurement, whether from prince or people, that seemed contrary to his country's good. And who, not biassed by party, can refrain from warmly admir-

ing characters such as these ? or would think of comparing them with individuals of common prudence and honesty, who have never gone out of their way to do much good to any one, and have never passed through temptation's fiery ordeal.

It is evident from the above, that admiration of what is rare contributes to the formation of moral sentiment. Now the only element of admiration which differs essentially from those formerly mentioned as arising from the view of utility, is the emotion of Wonder. Therefore wonder at what is rare, is the feeling which communicates a peculiar warmth to our moral sentiments, which always comprise a judgment as to the tendency of actions, and a feeling of love or hatred, of good or ill-will towards the actor.

It is owing then to the emotion of wonder that those sentiments, though based upon utility, do not vary accordingly. But wonder springs from RARITY ; and, consequently, this must be considered a new foundation of moral sentiment. Upon the whole, moral sentiment springs from UTILITY and RARITY, the former being discovered by reason and felt by sympathy ; the latter acting through wonder ; and, consequently, REASON, SYMPATHY, and A SUSCEPTIBILITY TO WONDER, are the three mental principles in which moral sentiment originates.

The following observations tend to corroborate this conclusion. In the first place, the very words used familiarly in writing and in conversation, prove how much our moral sentiments depend upon rarity, for when we wish to express our warm commendation of a character, or impress others in his favour, we talk

of his *uncommon* generosity, his *rare* devotedness, his *unexampled* benevolence, his *extraordinary* patriotism, his *singular* energy and courage. Every one of these terms conveys the same idea, rarity, and implies the highest praise we can bestow.

But in order to prove that rarity is essential to the growth of moral sentiment, we shall proceed to show that if all those acts now called virtuous, were practised universally, the ideas both of virtue and vice, of right and wrong, of merit and demerit, would be totally unknown. The same would be the case were men altogether mischievous. Suppose a state of society like the golden age of the poets, in which all the necessaries, and even the luxuries of life, were supplied spontaneously in unlimited abundance, and where, consequently, property and crimes against property, were unheard of; and likewise, suppose that no man ever felt tempted to injure the person, defame the character, or steal away the affections of any one. Here then injustice being unknown, how could there be formed a notion of the contrary? The idea of the one, as necessarily implies the possibility of the other, as the notion of a solid, the existence of a liquid or a vapour. The same holds true of all the other virtues.<sup>4</sup> Were men always grateful for bene-

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<sup>4</sup> Hume saw very well that the virtue of justice is entirely dependent on the mingled condition of human life, as determined partly by outward circumstances, partly by the constitution of the mind itself; and therefore it is the more singular that he did not perceive that the same holds true of all the other virtues. See "Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals." Sect. Of Justice.

fits conferred, active and upright in their public capacity, charitable in their private conduct, temperate in pleasure, persevering in their endeavours, courageous in the presence of danger, and patient under suffering, how could they have learnt the meaning of such terms as ingratitude, corruption, hard-heartedness, intemperance, fickleness, cowardice, and forgetfulness? Take again the opposite supposition, that all men were incurably given up to those vices, and could they conceive anything else? These terms and the corresponding sentiments are adapted to a state of mingled good and evil, where subsistence is obtained not without labour and difficulty, and where consequently many are tempted to seize upon it without toil, and where all are moved by various and conflicting inclinations, some tending to the happiness, others to the misery of the species. Were there no such dispositions and acts as we now call vicious, it is evident that there could not be any sentiment of moral disapprobation among mankind; and if there were no moral disapprobation, there could be no moral approbation, for how could we applaud that which we never had known, and therefore could not fancy, otherwise? In like manner, were there no such dispositions and acts as we now call virtuous, there could not be among men any sentiment of moral approbation; and were there no moral approbation, there could be no moral disapprobation, for in order to condemn we must have learnt to applaud. But since the "thread of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together," this contrasting with that, we are conscious of the difference, and approve the one and find fault with the other ac-



cordingly ; and the fewer the good threads, the more highly do we prize them. Thus it appears, that rarity is essential to the growth of moral sentiment.

In the second Part of this Book, when treating of Practical Morality, we shall arrive at the same conclusion in a different way, and each proof being independent, the one will corroborate the other. In the mean time, enough has probably been said to put this question in a tolerably clear point of view. But it may be that some will call Rarity a very poor foundation for moral sentiment ; and so, in truth, it would be, were it to stand alone ; but when duly combined with Utility, so far from being poor or unsafe, it is a broad and solid basis. For we shall find, in the second Part of this Book, that the effect produced upon us by rarity is perfectly agreeable to the most far-sighted views as to the real purpose of moral sentiment ; and though this effect be not first owing to reason, it is strictly conformable to that faculty, and may be strengthened by it on subsequent reflection. This much, however, must be allowed, that since the emotion of wonder, which springs from rarity, is of an exciting nature and warms the whole soul, and since it is roused not only by rare moral qualities, but also by rare talents, or even beauty, it may sometimes so captivate the affections as to overpower the judgment, and thus pervert, not merely stimulate, moral sentiment. Admiration for what is rare is, therefore, a copious source of fallacy and danger, whenever it escapes from the salutary guidance of utility ; and if, without the one, moral sentiment would be null, or at best weak, cold, and powerless in practice,

without the other it would have no good basis, but would be variable, whimsical, and depraved. But observations on the causes which may pervert our sense of right and wrong belong properly to the following Section. Having, in the present, traced the origin of moral sentiment, we have next to inquire what are the secondary causes by which it is subsequently propagated, strengthened, modified, or perverted.

SECTION II.—*On the Secondary Causes of Moral Sentiment.*

THOUGH the causes stated in the preceding Section are sufficient to account for the origin of moral sentiment, yet, in order to explain all the phenomena connected with it, we must have recourse to other and secondary causes, which subsequently come into operation. These causes are various, but most, if not all of them may be comprehended under five general heads ; 1. Education ; 2. The Presence in the Mind of some Strong Passion or Emotion ; 3. Complexity of Action ; 4. Local and Temporary Utility ; 5. The Formation of General Rules.

I. EDUCATION.

1. The first and most important of these secondary causes is education, or early custom. This engenders habits not only of acting, but even of thinking and feeling ; in other words, creates a tendency to the repetition of certain thoughts, feelings, and actions ; and herein lies the whole efficacy of education.

Now the influence of education depends upon two grand principles of human nature, Association, and the imitative principle, or the principle of Example.<sup>5</sup> This is sometimes called sympathy, but the latter term having been employed in the preceding Section in a more restricted sense, I shall continue to use it as before, to signify the principle by which we participate in the weal and woe of others. In reality, this is but one form of the more general principle of imitation, by which we catch not only the feelings, but also the opinions, and even the outward ways of those with whom we associate. Mirth begets mirth; laughter, laughter; sorrow, sorrow; languor, languor; courage, courage; fear, fear; despondency, despondency; applause, applause; disfavour, disfavour; and the opinions and actions of one man have also a manifest influence upon those of another. This principle, as might be supposed, acts with the greatest force when large bodies of men are brought together, as in an army, a meeting for political or religious purposes, or even in a theatre or other place of public amusement. Those sudden emotions of courage, and those no less sudden fears, which determine victory or defeat; the rapid and tumultuous movements of large popular assemblies; the bursts of applause which gladden, or the groans and hisses which dismay an actor, are all propagated like wild-fire on the principle of imitation. Nay, the communication of opinion has sometimes been almost as rapid as that

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<sup>5</sup> It may be observed that the term *imitation* does not here necessarily imply *intention*.

of emotion. This has been particularly seen in revolutionary times, when some great changes have unsettled the minds of men, and prepared them for further changes. Without the principle in question, it would be utterly impossible to account for those sudden and simultaneous conversions from one political creed to another, by which nearly a whole people has been affected; for we cannot imagine that reason could operate thus quickly and universally. Never, perhaps, was there witnessed so sudden and general a change of opinion as during the French Revolution. Let us attend to the celebrated author of the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, whose object was to defend that great event against the attacks of Burke, by no means to run it down. “Doctrines were universally received in May, which, in January, would have been deemed treasonable, and which, in March, were derided as the visions of a few deluded fanatics.”<sup>6</sup> Will any one say that this change was brought about by mature reflection rather than by imitation?

This principle, which is of such importance in war and civil politics, which determines the victory or the defeat of armies as if by magic, and precipitates revolution by inflaming the minds of men, is for ever at work in private life, though it may be silently and imperceptibly. In the child, however, the principle is so strong that every one must have remarked it; for he acts

“As if his whole vocation  
Were endless imitation.”

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<sup>6</sup> *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, p. 38. See also my *Disquisition on Government*, p. 3, 4.

Can we then suppose that in morals alone this principle has no influence? On the contrary, that influence is felt and acknowledged by every one, for it is universally allowed that morals are better taught by example than precept. Nor does the example of others influence our actions alone, or our practical morality, but it extends to our moral sentiments. When the child listens to those around him who are relating some act of virtue or of vice, does he not mark the words employed, as well as the emphasis, the tone, the gesture, and the expression of countenance with which those words are accompanied? The terms of approbation and disapprobation are not usually pronounced with an indifferent accent or air, but with the signs of some emotion; and this, being readily communicated to the youthful mind, becomes his first lesson in morality. He feels a sentiment in some degree corresponding to that of his elders, who here are really his instructors, though they may not be aware of the moral education they are giving; and when similar occasions arise, his mind is prepared for similar sentiments. Thus, example, and especially early example, is at least one way in which moral sentiment is communicated.

The effect of example is greatly assisted by another principle, that of association. When two states of mind have frequently occurred together, the presence of the one is apt instantly to call up the other without any effort on our part, and even in spite of our will. This principle being now so well understood, it is unnecessary to dwell upon it here; but I may remark, that since any thought or conception suggests any

other thought or conception, or even any emotion, with which the first was formerly united, we thus by means of our thoughts can really influence our feelings. When these are once roused we cannot subdue them directly, for the more we dwell upon them, the more do they gather strength, but we can turn to some subject which may change the current of our thoughts, and so prevent the recurrence of the emotion. In like manner, if we wish to encourage any feelings, we must pursue some train of reading, thought, or action, which may serve to bring them to mind.

According to this principle of association, when the youthful mind has once caught its moral sentiments by example, and has been conscious of approbation and disapprobation, these sentiments are apt to spring up as before, when similar circumstances present themselves; till by frequent repetition, a habit is formed of deciding and feeling on moral subjects with the utmost promptitude, and accuracy. This then is the principle which accounts for the great rapidity of our moral sense, and obviates the necessity of supposing, either that in every case we weigh the utility of actions, or else that moral sentiment has no foundation in utility. By attempting to prove too much, we often endanger the proof of what is really true; and thus it would happen in the present instance, were we to maintain that in every case of moral praise or blame we have a distinct eye to utility; for this outwork being easily overthrown, it might be inferred that the whole structure was baseless. But by means of the two principles of example and association, we can show how moral sentiment may be taught and propagated

among men, particularly among the rising generation ; and why it arises so surely and instantaneously ; provided it already exist, for these principles by no means account for its origin. As no man can communicate knowledge before he possess it himself, so no one could conduce to the spreading of moral sentiment were he not conscious of it in his own bosom, and though he also may have derived it from others, yet in the first instance it could not have been so acquired. In short, moral sentiment must have originated somewhere before it could be spread by example and association ; and the foregoing theory shows what that origin was, without supposing that on all occasions we look to the fountain head. It would be as erroneous to assert that we never approve or blame without a distinct view of all the consequences of actions, as it would be to deny that we ever regard them at all ; for both these propositions are utterly opposed to experience, as well as contrary to reason ; since on the one supposition, moral decisions would be far too slow and tame, on the other, judgment, so important in other subjects, would in this be of no avail. Can we think that here, where his happiness is so much at stake, and where promptitude in word and deed is so necessary, man is left solely to reason ? or can we believe that he here throws it entirely aside, and placing virtue on a par with beauty, becomes the mere creature of feeling.

These two principles will also explain why some vicious practices and false sentiments have long prevailed in certain ages and among certain nations ; for howsoever those sentiments may have arisen, whether from erroneous views of utility, or from real

but temporary utility, they might be continued from example and association down to more enlightened times, and after the circumstances that gave them birth had passed away. It is well known how much men hold to their customs, and that these may long survive the occasions whence they sprang. The people of Paris cannot certainly be thought very religious, but they observe with so much regularity the various holidays of their church, that they might well pass for good catholics. Though Lent be not kept very strictly, and fasting be much gone out; yet the carnival which originated in that abstinence, and was a sort of compensation for it, is still duly celebrated; and the fat ox parades the streets as in the olden time. In like manner, many usages of a vicious nature and false sentiments corresponding, may from the force of custom long outlive their original causes, and even defy the better reason and the better feelings of a purer age. Long after the Romans had been civilized by the science, the arts, and the superior humanity of the Greeks, they continued to delight in the horrid butcheries of the Amphitheatre, and could look upon the dying gladiator without either pity or remorse: and even now when christianity has so much humanized mankind, the Spaniards, nay, Spanish women, can behold their sanguinary bull-fights without compunction, and even despise those who give any sign of feeling. Here we have a signal instance of perverted sentiment, for can any perversion be greater than to look with contempt on those who are not so hard hearted as ourselves.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See note (A).



In ancient times, when slavery was common, the slave, though of the same colour, was looked upon as almost a different being from the free-man, as we may learn from Aristotle himself, and was subject to a different code of morality. Thus, at Rome, if a master were killed in his own house, all his slaves were to be put to death. To us, this seems horrible; but the law would not have allowed the practice, had it been repugnant to the moral sentiments of the Romans. During the battle of Philippi, the virtuous Brutus caused his slave-prisoners to be massacred in cold blood; and what is more, his biographer Plutarch expresses no blame on the occasion.<sup>8</sup> In countries where negro slavery still unfortunately exists, the injurious treatment of slaves is in general regarded by masters with wonderful indifference; and atrocious indeed must be the act that can rouse their indignation. The slave trade is still so recent even with us, that it is not always looked upon with the full horror it deserves; but one hundred years hence, will it be credited that there were Englishmen in the nineteenth century who could defend this diabolical traffic? From such instances as these we may learn the force of example and association in modifying the sentiments of men for the better or for the worse, and hence the importance of education, especially of moral education, which owes its efficacy mainly to those principles.

## II. PASSION, OR STRONG EMOTION.

### 2. The next secondary cause which we have to

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<sup>8</sup> See Plutarch in Brut.

consider is the presence in the mind of some violent passion, or strong emotion of any kind ; whether it arise entirely from the action before us, or have been previously roused. Since nothing blinds the judgment and misdirects our actions more than violent passion, we cannot be surprised that it should also pervert our moral sentiments. Now emotion may be excited by causes which affect our interest directly, and even by those which affect it indirectly, or not at all. When our own interests are immediately concerned, it is difficult to look on any action with a coolness sufficient to form an unprejudiced judgment, and award a due degree of praise or blame. If the action be decidedly hostile and injurious to us, our indignation often swells beyond all bounds, and we heap every term of reproach upon our enemy ; and if the act be advantageous and friendly, our heart over-flows with love and gratitude, and our lips teem with praise. To the impartial observer, the act may in reality appear virtuous or the contrary, but he is far from approving or disapproving with the same warmth as the party affected ; and he readily accounts for that warmth from the private injury or benefit, which mingles individual wrath or kindness with the general sentiment of morality. But sometimes passion is so strong as not merely to exaggerate, but utterly to pervert that sentiment, and change for the moment our notions of right and wrong ; as when a measure of public utility deeply wounds our private interest, and when right cannot be done without a particular injury. In this case, our feelings may so far get the better of us, as en-

tirely to obscure our mental vision and corrupt our moral sense, and we may pour forth volleys of abuse, where the highest applause is truly merited. Those who would abolish slavery ought surely to be praised and admired for their benevolent exertions in the cause; but in the United States of America, they are deeply execrated by many, pursued as criminals, and sometimes even put to death. In a land of equality, and where the law has given equal rights to free blacks, no injustice can be greater than that universally practised in America, where no man of colour is allowed to exercise those rights; but this flagrant violation of morality is covered by the passions of the whites. In such cases as these, where the offenders are many, and where one encourages another, conscience may be quite lulled to sleep; but in general, and when the passion is confined to one or a few, the sense of right and wrong returns after a short interval, and tells us that we have been unjust. - Thus passion may be compared to the morning mist, which for a while deranges our ideas of distance, and magnifies objects to the eye, but impairs not the faculty of vision; for this is as accurate as ever, when the sun has risen, and the mist vanishes away.

Even when an action does not particularly affect our interests, and in itself is not calculated to rouse any strong emotion, it may be unduly approved or disapproved, if it proceed from one already known as our friend or our enemy. If we love or hate any one, we cannot help looking upon him with some degree of favour or disfavour, and are naturally inclined to put

a good or bad construction upon all his actions, to see virtue or vice, merit or demerit, where in truth there is little or none. In this case then, a previous feeling for or against a person, so predisposes the mind as in some degree to warp its moral sentiments whenever that individual is concerned, and prepares it to approve or disapprove beyond measure, even in cases where no private interest is at stake ; but should a new benefit or injury be now added to the old, the feeling will be apt to swell into an emotion so violent, particularly in the case of injury, as quite to overpower the mind and derange its views of morality.

In the above instances, it is private benefit or injury, private affection or dislike, that prevents us from judging and feeling as we in strictness ought, and as the impartial really do. Nor can we be surprised at this when we consider the nature of moral sentiment. For as this comprises some degree of love or hatred towards those who seem to have acted right or wrong ; our private feelings of gratitude or anger, of friendship or enmity, must mingle with the general feeling, and increase or diminish its intensity according as they go along with or against it ; and it must be as difficult to like for a virtuous act, a person whom we formerly hated, as to dislike for a vicious deed, one whom we already love.

But it is not private feeling alone that perverts our moral sentiments. There is another emotion which is not confined to a few, and is not necessarily connected with any private interest or affection, but,

arising from general causes remote from self, has a far wider and more important influence on the moral nature of man. This is Admiration for the rare and great, which has already been mentioned, but must now be more fully considered.

We have already seen that admiration is a compound state of mind, allied to love as well as to esteem, but differing essentially from both by comprising an emotion of wonder. It has also been shewn that rarity, the source of wonder, is necessary to the formation of moral sentiment: but since there may be rare talents, or rare beauty, as well as rare worth; and as those excite wonder and admiration as well as this, our feeling for the former may be so warm, as greatly to modify that sentiment. Praise and blame may now no longer be awarded according to the utility of actions, duly combined with their rarity, but according to rarity chiefly or alone; and thus the marvellous will be lauded as if it were the good. When the imagination and affections are strongly excited, calm reason cannot be heard, and modest worth appears but a tame affair; and nothing is more exciting than wonder produced by what is extraordinary.

Of all the causes which may pervert our moral sentiments, this is the most general as well as the most insidious and dangerous. For, since some degree of wonder is not only allowable, but necessary to communicate warmth to those sentiments, we may not always distinguish between the wonder arising from rare talents and that from rare worth, and are constantly in danger of morally approving what we

ought only to admire ; or of not disapproving, what otherwise we should certainly condemn. Hence, in particular, the favour shewn to conquerors, those destroyers of mankind. In reading or hearing of the achievements of Alexander, Cæsar, Frederick, or Napoleon, who can help admiring not only their rare sagacity, but also a variety of qualities which belong not to pure intellect, but to the active powers of man ; such as steadiness of purpose and unwearied perseverance combined with quickness in deciding and executing, undaunted courage united with patience in adversity, and buoyancy under every misfortune. Qualities such as these, and in such perfection, every one must admire, and some of them are worthy not only of admiration, but even of moral approbation, provided they be well employed ; but in the brilliancy that surrounds them we are apt to lose sight of the material question, whether they have been used or abused. As there are particular instances of good, which tend to blind us to the bad consequences of infringing a general rule, so there are general rules which blind us to particular instances of evil. Thus, courage, perseverance, &c. being in general useful qualities, are commended accordingly, and, it may be, even in cases where they are decidedly injurious, provided their effects be great and wonderful ; for though a common malefactor may show great courage and perseverance, we admire not him as we do a mighty conqueror, who has laid waste a whole country with fire and sword. But the case of general rules belongs to another head, and should not have been mentioned here, were it not that in the present in-

stance it combines with the effects of wonder to warp our moral sentiments ; for every one must allow that conquerors meet with a very modified disapprobation, if they be disapproved at all. When national vanity is gratified by conquest, moral disapproval may be quite swallowed up in admiration. What Greek, at least what Macedonian, found fault with Alexander for over-running the East ; what Roman with Cæsar, so long as he fought only with barbarians ; or what Frenchman with Napoleon, so long as he was victorious ? One indeed, and only one, *did* accuse Cæsar before the Senate, for having made war with the Germans, and slaughtered great multitudes of a people with whom the Romans were at peace ; but this was the virtuous Cato, and his voice was drowned amid the shouts and laughter of his countrymen.

### III. COMPLEXITY OF ACTIONS.

The third cause of variation in moral sentiment, is the complexity of actions, together with the fallibility of human reason. Having already alluded to this cause in the former section, we need not dwell long upon it here. Suffice it to remark, that since there are many actions and even mental qualities which produce both good and evil, and since the good may strike some minds more, the evil others, those will naturally approve where these will condemn. As a striking and important instance, I may mention the opposite qualities of pride and humility, which combine with so many emotions, influence so many actions, and give a turn to the whole character. It would be foreign to our present purpose to balance the advantages and disadvantages of these different

states of mind, for this belongs to practical morality ; and all we have now to remark, is the fact of the varying sentiments of mankind upon this subject. It is generally admitted, that in nothing do heathen and Christian morality differ so much, as in the encouragement given to these rival qualities ; for the one system is favourable to pride, while the other preaches humility. The Scriptures assure us, that “ God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble,” and, in truth, they every where abound with encomiums on lowliness of spirit. It is on this fundamental difference that the author of the *Internal Evidence of Christianity* founds one of his leading arguments for the divine origin of the religion ; for he considers that the excellence, together with the newness of this moral system, proves its sacred origin.<sup>10</sup>

Not only are the consequences of actions sometimes very complicated and puzzling from the mixture of good and evil, but the intention which gave rise to them is frequently doubtful, and can never certainly be known. Therefore in addition to the possible diversity of views as to consequences, there may also be a difference of opinion as to the probable state of mind in which the action originated ; and on this the merit depends. It is easy to see that the union of these two sources of error must create a considerable uncertainty in the judgment, and hence

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<sup>10</sup> See Soame Jenyns on the *Internal Evidence of Christianity*. The arguments of this author have been adopted by Paley in his *Evidences*.



in the moral sentiment, of so fallible a creature as man.

#### IV. LOCAL AND TEMPORARY UTILITY.

4. Local and temporary utility is the fourth cause which modifies moral sentiment. This cause is nearly allied to the last, though in the former case the difference lay not in the nature of the action, but only in the views of the spectators, while here some local and temporary circumstances are supposed to vary its real utility. Owing to such partial circumstances, some actions and some mental qualities may be more particularly approved or disapproved among certain nations, or at certain times; or even some quality generally esteemed a virtue may be deemed a vice, or a vice a virtue.

The republic of Rome, and many other ancient republics, arose from small beginnings, in the midst of hostile nations, all jealous of a rising state, and in some cases surrounded by barbarians, to whom plunder was the strongest of inducements, and war itself a sport. In such circumstances, the constant necessity for self-defence made valour the most indispensable of qualities, and military excellence in general more valuable than civil merit. It cannot therefore surprise us that valour should here have been highly commended, or at least, that cowardice should have been branded with the deepest ignominy. Among the Romans, the word for valour was the same as that for virtue. War, which at first was necessary for self-defence, soon became a national taste, and conquest a national object, and therefore the qualities connected with it were still as much prized as ever. Military valour, which at

first had been encouraged, and rationally encouraged, as the only safe-guard from bondage and destruction, was afterwards immoderately stimulated for the conquest and plunder of the world. He who could have witnessed, unmoved, the spectacle of a Roman triumph, must either have been wonderfully wise, or wonderfully insensible.

The permission and even the praise of suicide probably took its origin in this extravagant admiration for valour. The act by which a man gives up the present life with all its joys and hopes, was supposed to prove no ordinary courage and resolution ; such as on other occasions might have saved his country, or conquered a valuable province. This frame of mind being considered eminently useful, it was applauded wherever it was shown, and therefore in the case of self-slaughter ; for great, it was thought, must be the courage which could triumph over the love of life as well as the fear of death.

The same causes which made valour peculiarly necessary rendered patriotism indispensable ; for as standing armies were long unknown, and when known became fatal to the republics, each citizen was bound to take up arms to defend his country, or increase its sway. Now, as some strong motive is required to induce civilians to quit their ordinary occupations, whether of business or pleasure, and start to arms with alacrity, therefore love of country was fostered by law and opinion, and patriotism became a leading virtue. Moreover, as republics, particularly democratic republics, are peculiarly exposed to one danger, internal tyranny from the over-grown power of an in-

dividual, therefore tyrannicide was not only allowed by opinion, but lauded to the skies. In France, the statue of Napoleon is yearly crowned with flowers ; but the tyrant-killer, not the tyrant, was worshipped at Athens and Rome. Talking of Cæsar, “*jure cæsus creditur*,” says even Tacitus, writing in an age of despotism. Though Brutus was the private friend of Cæsar, he absolved by opinion for the share he took in his death ; and even Timoleon, who slew his own brother, was applauded by the majority.<sup>11</sup>

The most violent attempt, perhaps ever made, to change the moral sentiments of men, is that recorded of Lycurgus, who is said to have encouraged theft under certain circumstances, especially if undetected. If war were a principal concern in all the republics of antiquity, at Sparta it was almost the sole business of the citizens, for all common labour was done by the Helots. The severe treatment of these last showed the Spartans what they might themselves expect were they reduced to subjection by any neighbouring state ; so they submitted to the discipline of Lycurgus as a safeguard from such a calamity. To encourage watchfulness on the one hand, a spirit of stratagem on the other, qualities so useful in war, the Spartan lawgiver may have thought fit to encourage ingenious pilfering. And as gold and silver were banished from the territory of the republic, and with them all costly manufactured articles, containing much value in little bulk, there could have been nothing very precious to steal, of any moderate dimensions.

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<sup>11</sup> See note (B 1)

After the Fall of the Roman Empire, Europe was long a scene of confusion, war, rapine, and devastation. Gradually, however, affairs grew a little better, kingdoms became established, and some degree of order prevailed; though power was still too disseminated, the central authority too weak, and law often a dead letter. Under such circumstances arose chivalry and knight-errantry, the most ingenious, noble, captivating, poetically fanciful, and beautiful invention that ever was hit upon, as a remedy for a very imperfect state of society.

O gran bontà de' cavalieri antichi!  
 Eran rivali, eran di fè diversi,  
 E si sentian degli aspri colpi iniqui  
 Per tutta la persona anche dolersi;  
 E pur, per selve oscure e calli obliqui  
 Insieme van senza sospetto aversi.<sup>12</sup>

Such was the temper of mind which chivalry sought to instil into its true knights, a temper of generosity, forgiveness, self-sacrifice, and above all, devotion to the fair, itself a most humanizing principle, and well calculated to tame hearts which otherwise might have been as hard as the steel wherein they were clad. But, change the circumstances, and chivalry no longer appears a powerful element of civilization, a glory, a light in the world; but its forms are laughed at, its principles attacked, and its practices deemed those of a lunatic. It was easy for Cervantes to turn knight-errantry into ridicule, because it was no longer useful; but had he lived a

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<sup>12</sup> Orlando Furioso, Canto i.

century or two earlier, he would have admired it as much as any one ; for the sentiments of his mock hero are often truly dignified.

Upon the same principle of local and temporary utility it is easy to account for the prevalence in certain situations of some horrid practices, such as the exposure of children, and the abandonment of the old and infirm. Among savage nations, where subsistence is highly precarious, it may sometimes have been thought as well to put children to death as to let them starve, and where there was not food for all, better that the old and useless should perish than the young and active. We are much more astonished to find that the custom of exposing ill-made children prevailed among the civilized nations of antiquity ; but the practice probably arose from a cause before mentioned, their eager solicitude about war, for, with this object in view, a child was not worth the rearing, unless he could become a soldier.<sup>13</sup>

#### V. GENERAL RULES.

The last cause to be here mentioned as influencing moral sentiment is the formation of general rules, and the use of general terms. Since hardly anything of importance can be done well without some general

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<sup>13</sup> Even at the present day, temporary utility may be allowed as an excuse for what otherwise would be murder ; as when, after a shipwreck, the boats being overladen with people, some are thrown over-board in order to save the remainder. See the late account of the loss of the *William Brown*, (spring of 1841) and the dreadful tragedy that followed, as well as the lenient opinion expressed thereupon, especially in the letter of the English Consul at Havre.

rule which may sum up our own experience or that of others in a comprehensive formula, to serve as a guide in particular cases, and obviate the necessity of a long and tedious inquiry on every occasion, we cannot be surprised that this necessity should have been felt also in morals. The first appearances of actions are often so deceitful, so contrary to the ultimate result, and some are really so complicated with good and evil, that without general rules, the fruit of long experience, we should often be at a loss what to think ; and while some would pronounce at random, or on the first impression, others would hesitate too long, till all warmth of feeling was gone, or the time for decision was passed. But by means of general rules, the wisdom of ages is preserved and condensed for the use of coming generations, the eccentricity or slowness of individual minds is corrected, and accuracy, uniformity, strength, and promptitude communicated to moral sentiment.

The influence of general rules upon our moral sentiments may be traced to two causes, reason and association. By the first, we are led to adopt general rules and disapprove of their infringement, because we perceive that they are highly beneficial to society ; by the second we are acted upon without being aware of its power. It seems impossible to deny that part of the odium which attaches to the breaking of a law depends upon reasoning from utility ; for we often hear people work themselves and others into a fit of indignation by dwelling on the evils of a single example of disobedience, and the danger of its becoming contagious. Therefore it is not merely the

immediate effects of the act in question which are present to the mind, and call up moral resentment, but also the more remote consequences which flow from the infringement of a rule. The legislator looks to this last consideration alone, and even the moralist does not neglect it ; for if an act be such in itself as not greatly to rouse his indignation, he frequently increases it by the reflection, were such deeds to become general, there would be no living in the world. Expressions of this sort are in the mouths of every one, and they fully prove that we see the necessity of general rules, and disapprove those who break them accordingly.

But if it be allowed that our attachment to general rules arises partly from reason, which shows us their utility, and leads us to approve or disapprove on that account, more than we otherwise should ; it must also be confessed that our attachment is far too warm and lively to be the offspring of reason alone. Some other principle more rapid in its operation, and more nearly allied to feeling, must therefore be taken into account. Such is the principle of association. Upon hearing any signal instance of charity, justice, or fortitude, the facts of this case in particular are not the only elements which call forth our applause. The similarity of this instance of charity, justice, or fortitude, to many other instances which we have heard or read of, instantly suggests, if not those very cases, with all their peculiar circumstances, at least, the warmth of approbation with which they were accompanied in our minds ; and this being closely allied to the actual state of our feelings, as arising

from the case before us, the one emotion greatly heightens the other. Nay, the very words, charity, justice, fortitude, have so long and so frequently been associated in our minds with moral praise, that they never can be applied in a particular case, without suggesting that praise to our minds, and swelling the present by long remembered approbation.

Though general rules of morality be not only useful, but absolutely indispensable, we must not suppose that they are altogether free from danger or inconvenience, or that they never lead to fallacy in theory or errors in practice. When the use of general rules and general terms has once been fairly established, men gradually become accustomed to rest in them alone, and seldom examine the foundation on which they stand. Proximate rules, as well as proximate principles, are no doubt highly advantageous, the one in practice, the other in speculation, for the latter serve to mark our progress in knowledge, and lead us on to ultimate principles, while the former serve as a compendious guide, and obviate the necessity of constantly referring to fundamental rules. But a similar danger attends both. As the discovery of proximate causes may sometimes lead men to rest therein, forgetting the first cause of all,<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> It is true that a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to *Atheism*, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to *Religion*; for while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them, and go no further. But when it beholdeth the chain of them confederate and linked together, it must needs fly to *Providence* and *Deity*. Bacon's *Essays*, "Of Atheism."



so the use of proximate rules of morality often prevents men from looking beyond them to their original source. Thus, by degrees, those common rules come to be considered as the real basis of morality, and in speaking for or against any line of conduct, it is thought a sufficient reason to say, that it is just or unjust, temperate or intemperate, virtuous or vicious, right or wrong. With this observation, people are in general satisfied, and rarely push inquiry any further, by asking, why it is virtuous or vicious, or what is the fundamental difference between the two. Nor can it be supposed that this question can be often put in the hurry and bustle of the world, for there is no time for deep reflection, and men must make up their minds and act without delay. Nay, many come at last to have almost a superstitious veneration for these general rules, and would think it as unbecoming to look very narrowly into them, as a good Catholic to pry into the mysteries of faith.

We have before remarked, that mankind have an amazing tendency to substitute the means for the end, and from constant association to transfer at least a part of their affection from the one to the other. Upon this principle depends the respect, nay, the veneration paid to general rules of morality, which in truth are only means to an end, the improvement and happiness of the species, here and hereafter. It is thus that virtue in general, or any one virtue in particular, comes to be loved for its own sake ; and we are told by moralists that it ought to be so loved. Nor do I find fault with the advice, considered as a practical maxim, however singular it may seem to a

reflecting mind to love a mere abstraction, for such is justice, charity, temperance, or still more virtue in general, as distinct from an individual agent, and an individual action. Strictly speaking, nothing but a living being, capable of thought and feeling, can be the object of love, and it is only by an extension of the term that we can apply it to inanimate nature, or to generalities created by the mind itself.

To love virtue for its own sake, may well be considered excellent practical advice ; for since general rules are necessary, not only to enlighten our own conscience and guide our sentiments in regard to others, but also to govern our conduct and strengthen us against temptation, it is desirable that those rules should be invested with becoming sanctity. All I would ask is, that our veneration for them should not be so great, our faith in their excellence so implicit, as to make us forget that they are the work of fallible mortals, and therefore, may sometimes err ; that after all, they are but proximate rules, and consequently may require to be compared from time to time with some fundamental rule, to see if they be duly grounded. To instil into the minds of citizens a due respect for the government and laws of their ancestors, of which time has proved the utility, may be highly salutary ; but would we wish this respect to degenerate into a superstitious awe that dare not even improve ? Surely it is as absurd to deny that we ought ever to mount up to the first principles of government, as to assert that on every occasion we are bound to bring them forward. As, in the lapse of time, and amid the changes which inevitably at-

tend it, a political constitution may have become corrupt, or require some reform to suit it to the altered circumstances, so among the corruptions of the world, moral rules may sometimes deviate from their original purity, and in order to restore their beauty, must be washed in the fountain-head. The virtue of this fountain is equal to that of the stream which cleansed the Syrian leper.

It appears then that the use of general rules and general terms may lead to fallacy in theory as well as to error in practice, by hiding from our view the real foundations of morality, and preventing us from recurring to these as the ultimate rule of action. Thus one general term is explained by a second, virtuous by what is right, right by what is virtuous, or either by that which is our duty, which we ought to do, or which lays us under a moral obligation; all meaning the same thing, and the one being as well or as little understood as the other. And it will be easy to show that general rules do sometimes pervert our moral sentiments, and lead to errors in practice.

We have seen that the influence of general rules upon our moral sentiments may be traced to two causes, reason and association, but principally to the latter. So far as reason operates, that influence is beneficial, but so far as it depends upon association, though generally, it is not always, salutary. For, while there are certain qualities of mind bearing upon actions, which are almost invariably useful, such as justice, temperance, and fortitude, there are others of a mixed character, which generally, but not invariably lead to good. Such are active courage

and perseverance. It will be allowed that these qualities are commonly beneficial either to the individual possessed of them, or to others with whom he is connected, and that the very words are expressive of commendation. Hence, whenever we meet with these qualities, we are already prepared to applaud, from the force of association, arising from numberless cases where courage or perseverance, and praise have gone together. But, it is certain, that quite as much courage and perseverance may be shown in a bad cause as in a good, in destroying as in benefiting mankind, in conquering as in civilizing the world; and therefore, if here we follow our general rule, we may applaud where we ought to condemn. And that we sometimes do so is certain, partly from this cause, partly from that formerly mentioned, our wonder, and hence our admiration, at the rare and great, even at the great and bad. I have heard assassins lauded, at least political assassins; such as Alibeu, and others, who fired at the king of the French, because they showed great courage, and a rare indifference to life; and many of my readers may recollect that even the murderer Thurtell was raised into a sort of hero, on account of the determined and daring nature of his villany. In such instances, the general rule which tells us to approve, weakens, or overcomes the moral detestation which would otherwise arise from a view of the particular case, where courage and perseverance are made the instruments of crime.

Having now gone through the five secondary causes which influence moral sentiment, we may sum up the result in a very few words. The first cause, which

is education, or early custom, propagates moral sentiment, first among the rising generation, and hence among men of all ages; rouses it immediately on the proper occasions, directs it well generally, but perverts occasionally. Passion or strong emotion generally distorts, and sometimes quite perverts our sentiments, whether the emotion be peculiar to one or common to many: complexity of actions bewilders the judgment, and hence causes a variety in sentiment: local and temporary utility modifies the same in a greater or less degree, and sometimes may change it entirely; and general rules give it accuracy, uniformity, strength and promptitude in most cases, but pervert it in a few.



## PART II.

ON PRACTICAL MORALITY, OR THE RULE OF ACTION.

### CHAPTER I.—ARGUMENT OF THIS PART.

IN the preceding Part of this Book, having discussed the *nature* and *causes* of moral sentiment, in the present we have to consider what are the *reasons* which justify us in encouraging such sentiment, and what is the rule which we can rationally follow in awarding approbation or disapprobation. We have also to treat of the proper *object* of these sentiments, the circumstances which ought to modify praise and blame, and the motives to the practice of virtue.

In order to enlist the reason and feelings of mankind on the side of practical morality, it is not enough to discover the nature and causes of moral sentiment; for this nature and these causes being allowed, it may still be asked, why am I bound to favour such sentiment in myself and others? Can I find a guide to tell me when to approve and when to disapprove? or do I require no direction? What is meant by saying that I *ought* to act so and so, that it is my *duty* so to do, or that I am morally *obliged*? Lastly, are there any motives which reason can deem sufficient to lead me to the practice of virtue? To answer these questions is the object of the following Part.

## CHAPTER II.

ON THE FINAL CAUSE OR PURPOSE OF MORAL  
SENTIMENT.

**T**HE more we dive into nature, whether material or immaterial, organic or inorganic, the more are we convinced of the fact, that nothing has been made in vain. So far as our knowledge extends, we see everywhere proofs of design : no branch of knowledge is improved without adding to those proofs ; innumerable phenomena which at first seemed insignificant, have since been shown to have an useful tendency ; and hence we are warranted in concluding in other cases that there is a purpose, even where it has not been discovered. Indeed this inference is so natural to the human mind, that we cannot well believe anything to be absolutely useless, but are irresistibly led to think that it was made for something, and are constantly trying to find out what that object may be. If an anatomist perceive an unknown organ in some newly discovered animal, does he not instantly begin to speculate on its functions ? Does he ever imagine that it was there for no purpose ? Can we then suppose that the mind, so much more excellent than the body, affords less proof of design ?

When we consider the universality and general uniformity of moral sentiment among mankind in different ages and nations, it is impossible not to believe that we were made susceptible of such sentiment for

some wise and useful purpose. Nor can this belief be at all affected by the consideration whether moral sentiment be originally implanted in us, as some assert, or be necessarily derived from other known principles of our nature, as we have seen reason to conclude. In either case, the universality and general uniformity must be admitted, and these are all that is important for our present argument. Reasoning, then, from the analogy of nature, there is a strong probability in favour of the utility of moral sentiment, previous to all inquiry into its particular purpose, and, in the want of more definite evidence, that presumption ought to decide us to cultivate such sentiment in ourselves and others. But in the present case we are at no loss to discover what is the final cause.

In order to perceive the final cause or design of moral approbation and disapprobation, it is necessary to attend to three indisputable facts.

1. That all dispositions and actions are not the same in their tendency.

2. That men are susceptible of pleasure from self-approbation or from the approbation of others, and of pain from disapprobation.

3. That dispositions and actions are more or less subject to the will.

Unless these three facts be admitted, the purpose of moral sentiment is a perfect mystery; but if they be granted, then all is clear.

Were we to suppose that there was no real difference between dispositions or actions, but that the tendency of all was the same, then we could not



understand why we should wish to encourage or discourage one more than another. Again, were we unsusceptible of pleasure or pain, joy or grief, from acting well or ill, or were we indifferent to the praise or blame of others, then approbation or disapprobation could create no motive to conduct, and therefore they would be quite thrown away. Lastly, were dispositions and actions in no degree voluntary, the pleasure or pain of approval or disapproval would serve no purpose, since they could not change action or disposition. But supposing all the three facts, as above stated, to be true, then we see at once that some dispositions and actions may reasonably be encouraged in preference to others, that the susceptibility of men to praise and blame creates in them a motive to change their dispositions and actions, while the dependence of these on the will allows that motive to be effectual. What those actions are which we ought to encourage or discourage, and what is the proper object of moral approbation, will be seen more particularly afterwards ; but for the present it is enough to know, as common sense informs us, that we should promote all that is useful and check all that is injurious, either to the agent himself, or to those with whom he is connected.

This seems the proper place to consider an objection, raised by some who think themselves philosophers, against all expression of praise or blame, as applied to human actions. And this objection, it is the more natural to advert to at the present time, when a system has been industriously propagated, and is even said to have spread its roots widely if not

deeply in some parts of England, founded upon the irresponsibility of man, and the notion that approbation and disapprobation are alike senseless and unjust. This system, which attacks audaciously all the previous opinions and feelings of mankind, on morals, politics, and religion, owes its origin to an enthusiast of unwearied perseverance, and probably unfeigned philanthropy, but of shallow judgment, with a head impervious to argument. The individual in question, apparently with the best intentions, has constructed a scheme the most monstrous the world ever saw, if we can call that a scheme which consists in destroying all that men in every age have considered useful and venerable, and levelling the barrier which separates man from the brute. To such a system I should not have thought it worth while to draw the reader's attention, had not this immoral miracle seduced the minds of some, while its fundamental dogma has been advocated by others, who might not be inclined to adopt the whole of the plan.

We are told that man is entirely the creature of circumstances, and not a free agent; that therefore he is not responsible for his actions, and consequently that all praise or blame bestowed upon him on account of those actions is utterly senseless and unjust. Now the fundamental assertion that man is entirely the creature of circumstances, that is of outward circumstances, is contradicted by the widest experience. Let any one attend to the families with whom he is best acquainted; let him mark the characters of children, brought up as far as can be traced, exactly under the same circumstances, and then let him say whether

there be not frequently a prodigious difference between them. I might rest the decision of the controversy on this experience alone, convinced that no one can have much observed human nature as manifested in early life without being struck with the diversity of dispositions as shown from the earliest age, and under similiar treatment. But, be this as it may, the consequences drawn from the above opinion are altogether fallacious. Nay, let it be granted that man is entirely the creature of circumstances, and the argument in favour of the utility of moral sentiment will be doubly strong. In truth, it is only because man is swayed by circumstances, more or less, that moral approbation can serve any useful purpose, and the more he is governed by the former, the more influential is the latter. This will appear from the following considerations.

Were man in no degree the creature of circumstances, all attempts to modify his disposition, in other words, all moral education would be utterly thrown away; for education proceeds upon the supposition that by a change of circumstances, we can change the character. But were this supposition unfounded, man would leave this world as he entered it, according to the original impress which he had received from the hand of his Maker. In such a case, not only all moral education, in the popular sense of the word, but all expression of praise or blame would be useless; for they could not alter the primary tendency to good or evil. Reverse the case, and then the utility of moral approbation will appear; because by means of it we in reality change the circumstances, and hence may mo-

dify the disposition. Therefore the more man is acted upon by circumstances, the more powerful is education, and the greater the efficacy of moral praise and blame. Hence the fundamental axiom of the system above alluded to, so far from proving the uselessness of moral sentiment, proves on the contrary, that it is even more important than commonly supposed.

Assuredly this is not the place for entering upon the oft debated question of liberty and necessity ; but I may remark that it is exactly because the Will is *not* free from the agency of causes, outward as well as inward, that man becomes amenable to moral sentiment. Did the will differ from every thing else in nature by being left entirely to itself, unconnected with other objects, and uninfluenced by them, then, all laws, all sanctions, all rewards and punishments would be nugatory. These take for granted that the will, like other things, is exposed to the agency of causes, which may turn it this way or that, and so direct our actions. Unquestionably we are conscious of an inward power of originating changes and resisting the influence of outward causes, but we cannot specify how far this power extends. We must suppose that change accompanied with proofs of design originated not in matter, but in the mind of the Deity ; and the Creator has conferred upon man some portion of his own power of commencing a series of changes ; though this capability be limited by many proximate causes as well as by his over-ruling providence. It is exactly this two-fold nature of man which explains not only the utility of moral sentiment, but also its conformity to our notions of justice. Were

man entirely the creature of circumstances, then moral approbation and disapprobation would be doubly useful, but it might seem too generous or too severe to praise or blame any one for what he could not help ; and if man were in no degree ruled by circumstances, but were the originator of all his thoughts, feelings, and actions, though in this case it might seem just to commend or condemn, yet we should praise or blame in vain. Unite the two characters, and both the utility and justice of moral sentiment are apparent. Indeed, the universal sense of man, in all ages, proves that he considers himself justly responsible to two tribunals ; first to his own conscience, and then to the sentiments of others. This conviction is far too strong and too general to be the result of any passing circumstances or of any particular system of education ; nor can it be shaken by any arguments, were they even more reasonable than they seem, drawn from the unfathomable depths of the human mind, or the abyss of liberty and necessity.

It would be vain to deny the efficacy of moral approbation and disapprobation as an incentive to virtue and a check to vice. The law of the State takes cognizance only of such crimes as can be exactly defined, for otherwise reward or punishment would depend on the good pleasure of the Judge, not of the legislator, in other words of him who applies the law to a particular case, not of him who frames a general regulation without respect of persons. Rules of this sort, so arbitrary in their nature, would often lead to the most odious partiality, and

constantly to the dread or suspicion of it, and in the end would be worse than none. Not to mention that many acts would lose their whole value were they supposed to be performed merely from the fear of legal punishment, such as all acts of gratitude to man or piety to God, where the outward deed is as nothing compared with the state of mind whence it springs.

Since the Law soon fails, something of more general application is necessary to keep us in the path of duty ; some incentive or check for ever present, and adapted to every variety of circumstances. Such is moral approbation and disapprobation, first as felt by self, then as felt and openly expressed by others, in word, look, or gesture. The law of the State is itself founded upon these sentiments, and but for them it never could have existed, or been executed had it existed. Nay at this hour, whenever a law becomes obnoxious to popular sentiment, it is as a dead letter, unless some few happen to be more powerful than the many, and can enforce it by means of fear.

That incentive or check which a man feels within him, in other words his conscience, is the least erring of monitors, because no one can know so well as a man himself what he has done, or felt, or why he has so done. True, we have seen that even conscience may be perverted or lulled to an untimely sleep ; but so may the public conscience, and this latter must always be comparatively uninformed if not as to outward acts, at least as to the state of mind in which they took their origin. This state of mind can of course be open to none so fully as to the individual. Many too are the acts that may completely escape

detection, and many more may be perpetrated in hopes of such escape ; but who can fly from remorse ? Next to the Deity, then, conscience is the most enlightened as well as wakeful judge. “ Whither shall I go from thy spirit ? ” saith the psalmist, “ or whither shall I flee from thy presence ? If I ascend up into heaven thou art there ; if I make my bed in hell behold thou art there ; if I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee.”<sup>1</sup> In a modified degree these words might be applied to conscience.

The greatest hindrance to conscience is self-deceit. It is evident that in some men this goes a great way indeed, while in a less degree it exists in almost all. The feeling of self-complacency is so agreeable, and of self-dissatisfaction so disagreeable, that it is no wonder if we direct our mind more to the sources of the one than of the other, and dwell upon our excellencies more than on our defects. If the pain of remorse do not lead us to change our conduct, in other words, if it do not fulfil its purpose, it will prompt us to make a violent effort to drive the subject from our thoughts, and in this we may succeed for a time, if not for ever. And since, according to the nature of man, feelings are deadened by custom, especially painful feelings, as has been elsewhere shown, remorse, if it return, and return in

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm cxxxix.

vain, gradually loses its force, and at last may die away altogether. But this process will be marvelously facilitated, if we can persuade ourselves, or be persuaded by others that we are really not so much in the wrong. In other words, if we can blind our judgment, as we have here an interest in doing, we shall cease to be self-condemned, and shall stifle the worm that gnaweth inwardly. Here then is the use of the expressed sentiments of others ; for by them the errors and partiality of private judgment may be duly corrected. When every one is against a man, he tries in vain to lay a flattering unction to his soul, for do what he will, he is made to know and feel that he is to blame. Not only does the opinion of others enlighten his understanding, and thence reach his feelings, but the uneasiness that he feels from rebuke, directly rouses his own remorse, for the one is associated with the other. Admirable, truly admirable, is this divine arrangement, by which the failings and weaknesses of each man's best conductor, are relieved by the assistance of all the rest of the species.

If such be the inestimable advantage of a free, unbiassed, and disinterested expression of public sentiment ; what should be our feelings towards those who abuse so precious a power, and from private ends award praise or blame where they know them to be unmerited ? Such are flatterers and slanderers, both the pests of society, though the former appear amiable, the latter hateful. But the amiability of flattery is like the gaze of the basilisk, which captivates only to destroy. Flattery may be called the sleeping draught of conscience, and, like other narcotics, it kills by



soothing. When a man suspects that he has acted amiss, and begins to be self-upbraided, how pleasantly does flattery whisper in his ear that he is too scrupulous and sensitive, that he feels too much for others, too little for himself, that in truth he is over-conscientious, and had he acted accordingly, would have shown a culpable weakness! Language like this is such balm to a mind torn by remorse, that the giver of the balm may well be looked upon with pleasure, with favour, and with love.

When a man has long been used to flattery, especially when he never hears any thing else, that self-deceit to which all are naturally prone may at last become so confirmed, that he shall know not when he does wrong. This of course is the most hopeless of all conditions, for without a consciousness of wrong how can there be any improvement! It has always been allowed that flattery is the most dangerous enemy to princes, the temptation to it being so great, and the evil consequences inevitable. Without that self-deceit, which is fostered and strengthened by flattery, it would be difficult to account for the monstrous and oft repeated cruelties which have been perpetrated by sanguinary ruffians dignified by the name of King or Emperor. It is probable that in many cases they were totally unconscious of their own wickedness. Nor need we have recourse to Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, or Domitian, or their worthy followers and imitators, in order to see the evil effects of flattery. The same, though on a smaller scale, and happily restrained by law from the last excesses, may be witnessed in private life, where many

a domestic Nero, nursed by doting parents, and surrounded from infancy by a crowd of obsequious dependants, afterwards rules his little circle with a rod of iron, without even being aware that he is a tyrant. With all their imperfections, the public schools of England have at least this grand advantage, that they withdraw the sons of the aristocracy from the spoiling influence of home, from all its menials and sycophants ; and place them in a society where their rank and wealth are comparatively disregarded, and where they may find themselves no better, if not worse than other people.

If the expression of moral sentiment be so necessary in private life, it is no less important in public. What is called public opinion is not a mere judgment as to the expediency or in expediency of any proposed measures, but it also supposes a sentiment of praise or blame towards the actors. On the susceptibility of man to this praise or blame is founded the power of the press, that palladium of a free constitution. Without such susceptibility, nothing but fear of resistance could arrest the arm of authority, and abuse may go far before such resistance need be dreaded. But with feelings alive to good and bad repute, no one in a high station could go on with a system of tyranny, where men might freely speak and freely write, for conscience would be awakened, and remorse and shame would rend his bosom. Therefore, the first object of despots, or of those who wish to be so, is to chain the expression of sentiment, and by so doing, to prevent even its mental existence in many who take their opinions and catch their sentiments

from others. Who but must admire this effectual but peaceful contrivance of the Author of nature, whereby a check to misrule has been set in the breast of the governor, and the spring that moves it in the hands of the governed ! or, who can feel tamely towards those who would mar so beautiful a design ? If indeed, amid the strife of parties and the rage of contending factions, this power of the press be abused, and unmerited praise and obloquy heaped upon public characters, we ought to deprecate such writing, and apply an antidote as far as possible ; but when we can do no more, we must put up with the partial evil for the sake of the general good, remembering that we are but men.<sup>1</sup>

The above reflections will probably be thought sufficient to show the *purpose* of moral sentiment, which purpose may be supposed to have been in the mind of the Deity, when he rendered man susceptible of such sentiment, and thus became a final cause. The study of final causes must be highly agreeable to every well constituted mind, as it tends to enlarge the proofs of the wisdom and goodness of the Deity, a truth so improving and so consolatory to the human race : improving from the contemplation of superior excellence ; consolatory, from the belief in a superintending Providence which even here orders all for the best, and will complete the scheme hereafter. Whenever final causes appear, they will of course be viewed with interest, but no where with so much pleasure as in the structure and operations

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<sup>1</sup> See Note C 1.

of the human mind, that master-piece of Nature's work, that brightest emanation of the Deity !

There remains but one point to be considered under this head, namely, whether a perception of the utility of moral sentiment at all tend to its formation. Of course moral sentiment must be supposed already to exist before any such consideration could act as a secondary cause to strengthen or direct it, for did it not exist how could we estimate its utility? But moral approbation having sprung from its own original causes, and proving highly salutary in the commerce of mankind, may not this good effect react upon men's minds as a cause, inducing them to cherish more and more a remedy so admirably adapted to most of the disorders of life? If it be rash to say that this reflexion always, or even generally, enters into the minds of men when they approve or disapprove, it would be no less hazardous to deny that it ever comes into view. In the course of ages, this idea must surely have sometimes suggested itself, and whenever it did, it would necessarily add to the force of moral sentiment. But whatever may have actually been the case in time past, it is certainly desirable that this consideration should be attended to in time to come. The former is a speculative question, and belongs to speculative morality; but the latter is altogether practical. By pointing out the great results which are obtained by means of moral sentiment, we may naturally hope to rouse and warm it, when it becomes languid and cold through the deadening influence of custom, the power of bad example, the sophistry of flatterers, and the snares of self-deceit.

## CHAPTER III.

## ON THE NATURE OF VIRTUE.

IN commencing an inquiry into the real nature of Virtue, a subject which has occupied philosophers in all ages, it is peculiarly necessary to guard against verbal disputes. Let it be understood then that the question here to be discussed is not what may be the meaning of the word virtue as now used, or as it has formerly been used in our language, and still less what may be meant by the similar word in other languages, as by the *virtus* of the Latins, the *vertu* of the French, or the *virtù* of the modern Italians. Inquiries such as these may not be utterly useless; but they belong to the grammarian, not to the moral philosopher. The real question which we have to treat is, what may be the nature of that which generally *does* and always *ought* to command our moral approbation as above explained, whether that quality be called by the name of *virtuè*, or by any other. Undoubtedly this word, as at present employed among us, is commonly taken in that sense, though it would be rash to affirm that it is so always. As applied to woman, for instance, the term is used in a much more limited signification, and instead of comprehending every branch of morality, is restricted to one. Among the Romans, *virtus* was synonymous with valour, and with the modern Italians, *virtù* has sunk into taste.

Dismissing these verbal differences, we have now to inquire on what occasions moral approbation ought to arise in order to fulfil the purpose mentioned in the preceding Chapter; in other words, what is the quality of actions on account of which we are justified in approving them. And as the word *virtuous* is commonly applied in our language to actions which we actually approve, and, as may be supposed, justly, we here take it in that sense. In short, our object is to determine the characteristic quality or qualities of Virtue, and hence of Vice, for if we know the one, we know the other.

In the former part of this Book we found that a perception of utility is essential to the first growth of moral sentiment; meaning by utility, a tendency to good, that is to the happiness of man. This speculative question, we think, has been sufficiently proved; but whether it have or not, is little to our present purpose, which is to inquire not how moral sentiment originated, but how it must be applied in order to secure the end for which it was first designed, and which alone can satisfy our reason. Whether moral sentiment *did* spring from the perception of utility or not, surely it is desirable that the former should conform to the latter as much as possible. This proposition is so evident, that one is almost at a loss to understand how it could ever have been doubted. Most of the disputes on this subject seem at bottom to be verbal, and depend upon different senses affixed to the word utility. If that word be understood in its most comprehensive sense, as including all that in any way, directly or indirectly, immediately or

remotely, tends not merely to the apparent and outward, but to the real and inward happiness of the species, then to argue against utility as a sound foundation of morals, is in fact to argue against the advantage of happiness. What reasoning could we address to a man who should deny that happiness is desirable? Every word that we might use would be only the same idea clothed in another garb. All reasoning begins from some first principle, self-evident or granted, by means of which we may prove something else; and if we had no primary axioms, we could no more advance one step in reasoning, than we could move a weight without a support for our machine. Not only is happiness desirable here and hereafter, but, rightly understood, that is comprehensively, nothing else is of real consequence to man. On this subject, where reason fails for want of a more simple principle from which to argue, it may be permitted to call in the aid of authority. Let us listen to the venerable and philosophic author of the *Analogy of Religion*. "It is manifest that nothing can be of consequence to mankind or any creature, but happiness. This then is all which any person can, in strictness of speaking, be said to have a right to. We can, therefore, owe no man anything, but only to further and promote his happiness, according to our abilities. And, therefore, a disposition and endeavour to do good to all with whom we have to do, in the degree and manner which the different relations we stand in to them require, is a discharge of all the obligations we are under to them."<sup>1</sup> These are the

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<sup>1</sup> Butler's Sermons: Love of our Neighbour, Sermon 2.

words of a divine and a philosopher ; and they correspond with those of a philosophizing poet who exclaims,

Oh happiness ! our being's end and aim,  
Good, pleasure, ease, content, whate'er thy name !  
That something still which prompts th' eternal sigh,  
For which we bear to live, or dare to die.<sup>2</sup>

In a matter of this sort, which, if not self-evident, admits of no proof, all we can do is to state the meaning of the term, to prevent any dispute about words, and if then men be not agreed, they cannot converse together, since they appeal to different principles as the basis of their reasoning. Let it then be borne in mind, that under the term happiness, we include every species of enjoyment which man has ever felt or even conceived, whether springing directly from outward objects, or from the workings of his own mind. All enjoyments are good in themselves, but as some are incompatible with others, and as the smaller often prevent the greater, the former from their consequences are properly considered an evil. Take, for instance, the gratifications of the senses. Within certain limits these are universally considered as good, but beyond those limits they are generally and justly looked upon as evil, not only because they injure our health or impair our fortune, but also because they engender a state of mind unfavourable to more durable if not more intense happiness. For, it is a fact proved by the most ample experience, that an over-indulgence in sensual pleasures tends both to impair the intellect, and to deaden our sensibility

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<sup>2</sup> Pope's Essay on Man.



to the generous, charitable, tender, and pious emotions, and thus narrows the range of our felicity. And as from their consequences, certain pleasures are bad beyond a certain degree, so we can easily conceive that others, for the same reason, may be bad in any degree. These evil effects of pleasure may be often seen in children, who, when left to themselves, seem calm and happy, but after they have been violently excited, frequently lose their good humour.

What has been here said of happiness, must also be applied to utility, or the tendency to happiness. Unless, under the term utility, we comprehend a tendency to every conceivable kind of enjoyment of which mankind is susceptible, whether near or distant, connected or unconnected with sense and outward objects, and unless we suppose, that upon a view of all the consequences, the result, on the whole, and not merely on first appearances, is in favour of real mental happiness, the rule of utility cannot for an instant be maintained. Unfortunately, the term utility is commonly used in a much less extensive sense, to signify a gross and more palpable usefulness, such as can be seen and measured, or else which serves only the present purpose. It would, on this account, be desirable to employ another word in philosophical treatises on morals, did such an one occur in the English language ; but as this is not the case, we must put up with what we have, for were we to coin one, it could only be made intelligible by being translated into the vernacular tongue. All then that can be done is to retain the word, but fix its meaning as distinctly as possible.

Moral systems founded on utility may err in two ways.

1. They may be short-sighted.
2. They may be narrow.

Under the first head must be classed all those errors which arise from looking too much to the immediate, too little to the remote consequences of actions; under the second, such as spring from an imperfect conception of human nature, and its numerous sensibilities. Thus, were we to regard only immediate consequences, it might often appear highly useful to take from the property of one to give to another, as from the rich, the luxurious, the miserly, or the worthless, to feed the indigent and upright. But when we reflect on the power of example in weakening the respect for an useful general rule, the probability that this example would be followed in other and more doubtful cases, the general feeling of insecurity that would certainly prevail, the consequent check to industry and decline in individual as well as in national wealth, and the distress and poverty of many that must ensue, we see an amount of future evil out of all proportion with the present good. Secondly, taking an imperfect view of human nature, were we to suppose that man is solely or chiefly a sensual being, we should with the followers of Epicurus consider as useful whatever tends to the gratification of our appetites; and were we to look upon him as entirely a selfish creature, we should deem nothing useful but what directly tends to self-indulgence; forgetting the pleasures of sympathy, love, friendship, and charity, which affect us indi-

rectly through others, but make up so great a part of human happiness. Again, did man appear merely a mercantile animal, nothing but wealth would be thought useful; or did he seem only a philosopher, utility would mean the road to knowledge. In the language of merchants, a good man means a rich, and in that of scholars, it signifies a learned. But man existed before either commerce or learning, and he has desires and pleasures distinct from either.

It must be allowed that utilitarian moralists seem in general to have laid too much stress on the sensual and self-regarding pleasures, and too little on the purely mental and social; but whatever may have been the case with the masters, the disciples have assuredly shown that tendency. The notion of pleasure, considered as the chief good, as entertained by Epicurus, was no doubt too limited, but assuredly it was very different from that of his followers. The same observation applies to Bentham and his school, at the present day. It may well be doubted, whether that philosopher himself had adequate conceptions on this subject; but in regard to his sect there can be no question. Indeed, it must be granted that the doctrine of utility is easily misunderstood and perverted from its original purity, thus leading to error in theory, and laxity in practice. The word usually conveying a much more limited sense than when it is used philosophically, it is difficult at all times to bear in mind the extended and somewhat new signification; and even those who begin by allowing the wider meaning, are too apt to lose sight of it in the course of their inquiries. For

the word *utility* being commonly associated with only certain kinds of usefulness, it becomes difficult to extend that association to other cases. This would be a good reason for changing the word, could we find another to express our meaning, without the necessity of translating to make it understood, for then it could serve no purpose. Until such a term be found, we must be content to talk of utility, comprehensive utility, as a rational foundation of morals. Put were we to take it in a narrower sense, better, a thousand times better the untutored sense of mankind, than a system which would deify selfishness and sensuality.<sup>3</sup>

Systems of vulgar utility are the more dangerous on this account, that they contain a portion of truth, but not the whole truth; for were they utterly unfounded, the common sense of mankind would revolt against them. As it is, they are apt to win upon the unwary, because they recommend pleasure, which is always an agreeable theme; whereas comprehensive utility is often opposed to immediate gratification, allows only a very moderate indulgence in certain pleasures, and even prohibits some altogether.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Whewell has mentioned the word *Eudemonism*, derived from the Greek *εὐδαιμονία*, happiness, as applicable to that system which makes morality to depend on the production of happiness. See preface to Mackintosh's Dissertation. I am willing to accept the term, and would be called an *Eudemonist* rather than an *Utilitarian*. The word agrees well with the term *Eudemonology*, which I have already proposed to express the general Science of Human Happiness: while Ethics may be called *Deontology*, or the Science of *Duty*, which is one grand road to happiness.

Still further to illustrate our meaning, we may take some of the principal virtues.

First, with respect to the social virtues, gratitude, generosity, liberality, public spirit, and charity, which all suppose benevolence, the utility of these depends not merely on their tendency to promote the welfare of others, but also on their delightful influence on the mind of him who possesses such noble qualities. Whatever be the lot of one who feels these generous sentiments, he cannot be altogether unhappy, for he has within his bosom a well-spring of enjoyment copious and never-failing. Such is the inward and real happiness which flows from the presence, as well as the exercise of the benevolent feelings, that, it has been somewhere said, if a man were to be thoroughly and actively benevolent for a few months only, he would continue so all the rest of his life. These feelings are truly their own reward, for they bear happiness along with them from their own nature.

Secondly, of the self-regarding virtues, temperance in sensual indulgences is useful, not only because it maintains our bodily health, but also because it preserves health of mind, or a mental state open and free to enjoy whatever may present itself, whether addressed to the intellect, the affections, or the imagination : courage again is useful, as a defence against danger, personal or public ; and likewise as expelling fear, and as animating and delightful in itself. It is also intimately connected with generosity and mercy, whilst fear is allied to cruelty. The utility of fortitude is seen not only in lessening present evil, but

also in preparing the mind to bear up courageously against future evils. Lastly, prudence promotes happiness, not only by warding off calamity, but also by preventing anxieties which are almost as bad as the event.

Our system of comprehensive utility being now sufficiently explained, it will probably be allowed that utility, or a tendency to produce happiness is an essential element of virtue ; or, in other words, a characteristic of those dispositions or actions which ought to meet with our approbation. But, is it the only element ?

In treating of speculative morality, we saw that although we approve only of useful dispositions and actions, and disapprove of the contrary, yet that our approbation is not in proportion to utility ; for the most necessary are approved scarcely, if at all. In general, acts which spring from self-regarding interest are esteemed less virtuous than those which arise from a social feeling, while many of the former, however useful, are not deemed virtuous at all ; though the principle of self-love be more necessary to man than benevolence. Such, then, being the fact, we have now to inquire whether it can be justified by reason.

We have seen that moral sentiment springs from Utility combined with Rarity. But, it will be asked, is mere rarity a rational ground of approbation ? To this we answer, that mere rarity is not : but, that in estimating human dispositions and actions, rarity with utility is a sure guide ; for an action at once useful and rare, cannot be but virtuous. To perceive this

let us consider what is necessarily implied by rarity. If a disposition or action be allowed to be decidedly useful either to the agent or to others, and yet rare, there must of course be some powerful impediment to prevent its more frequent occurrence ; for a man is naturally inclined to benefit himself, and even his neighbour, when nothing hinders. In a word, if such an action be rare, there must be difficulty. If the difficulty arise from outward and invincible obstacles, since in this case no action can follow, none can be expected ; but if the obstacles may be overcome, then the fault lies in the mind which does not determine to vanquish them. Ultimately, then, the difficulty lies in the existence of opposing mental principles. Suppose, for instance, that the action is of a purely benevolent nature, and requires not only considerable exertion of mind as well as body, but also a pecuniary sacrifice, then the opposing principles are, love of ease, and love of riches. Again, if a man receive an intentional injury, or affront, which wounds him deeply and rouses his anger ; before he can forgive the offender, he must conquer the tendency to retaliation, so deeply implanted in our nature. Or, if any one give up a favourite pleasure, knowing that it would ultimately injure him, he must overcome his desire of immediate gratification, which may be very urgent. In these and similar cases, the difficulty lies in subduing some natural propensity, and the greater the difficulty the more rare must be the success. Rarity, then, supposes difficulty ; and to master this, force of mind is required. Now every one will allow that the instances just given, are in-

stances of virtue, and what do we see in them? first, we see an useful purpose, and secondly, an exertion of force to overcome difficulty and secure that purpose. Therefore, we conclude that **FORCE OF MIND EXERTED FOR AN USEFUL PURPOSE** is the essential character of virtue.

If these be the essential elements of virtue, the degree of it must depend not merely on the utility of an action, but also on the force of mind exerted to overcome difficulty, which force of mind can be measured only by the degree of self-denial or self-sacrifice that may be manifested. Now as we have seen that, generally speaking, the social virtues are more highly thought of than the self-regarding, it will be asked, does this fact agree with the above character of virtue? Perfectly; for the principle of self-love being naturally much stronger than that of benevolence, there is no difficulty whatsoever in following the former, except where a present gratification must be sacrificed for future good; and even in this case, the obstacles are not so great as when self-regarding interest must be quite given up for the sake of others. Therefore, agreeably to the above character of virtue, actions of the first description are not virtuous at all, nor are they usually deemed so, however useful they may be, while those of the second are virtuous, and are commonly thought so, though not in the same degree as the third class. An act of ordinary self-interest, implying no sacrifice, is never esteemed a virtue, and a temperate and prudent conduct is thought less praiseworthy than patriotic and benevolent actions.



Let us see why force of mind is required, and how it acts in different cases. And, first, as to the self-regarding virtues.

When we labour under any grievous pain, mental or bodily, force of mind is necessary in order to alleviate the suffering to which we are naturally prone to give way ; and force withdraws the mind from dwelling on the pain, by fixing the attention on something else. This is the virtue of Fortitude.

Again, when some favourite pleasure lies within our reach, we are naturally prompted to enjoy it ; but if we refrain, knowing that it will be ultimately injurious, force must be exerted to conquer a darling and pressing propensity. This is the virtue of Prudence or of Temperance, and here force acts as a *curb*.

Lastly, in order to insure success in any great undertaking, force of mind must be employed to conquer indolence and fear, which beset us all at times, and are ready to gain the mastery should we yield ever so little. Here we have the virtues of Courage and Perseverance where force acts as a *spur*.

In the case of the social virtues, greater force is required, whether as a curb or a spur, to restrain or to urge ; for many self-regarding desires, utterly opposed to the social, must here be overcome. Open acts of injustice, or flagrant breaches of humanity, may indeed be restrained by fear of law, or of infamy and its consequences ; but this cannot check many underhand practices at variance with kindly feelings, much less can it urge to deeds of positive beneficence. Besides, where the above motives act, or even may

act, the virtue is esteemed less than where they utterly fail. Thus, no one considers it a signal instance of virtue to refrain from stealing the purse, or filching the good name of a neighbour, because self-regarding motives may suffice for that ; but every one lauds the man who, in time of need, endangers his life to save his fellow-creatures. When the chevalier Bayard repaired in haste to his native town of Grenoble where the plague had broken out, what but a benevolent motive could have urged him to such a step ? and when scorning personal danger, he did all he could for the sick, was not this consummate virtue ?

From all this it clearly appears, that it is the union of force with an useful purpose which constitutes virtue. The purpose must be useful, otherwise, instead of virtue, there is either folly or vice ; and there must be force, or there is no merit, though there may be both innocence and wisdom.

By an useful purpose must be meant one which appears so to the individual in question. True, he may be deceived as to its real utility ; but if he have employed all suitable means of acquiring information, there may be error of judgment, but there is no want of virtue. If he have not employed all suitable means, he has shown a want of that force of mind required to study all the bearings of a question, and make him pause before he adopt a line of conduct ; and therefore he is morally deficient.

The purpose being supposed useful, the degree of virtue varies with the degree of force displayed. From this it follows that the greater the temptation,

the greater the virtue of resisting ; and the less the temptation, the greater the vice of yielding.

Here we see the difference between Law and Morals. Since law aims at nothing beyond the prevention of palpable acts of injustice, it seeks to reform the mind no more than is necessary for that purpose, and if successful in the former object, cares little about the latter. Therefore the rewards and punishments of law are not always in proportion to moral merit and demerit. Thus, in morals, the greater the temptation, the less the vice of yielding ; but in law, the greater the temptation, the more severe the punishment, in order the more effectually to check the outward action. What proportion between the moral crime of a man who robs from sheer necessity to keep himself and family from starving, and that of the rich and dexterous swindler who lives upon his wits ? But law makes no difference between the two. This disproportion, however, between legal punishment and moral disapprobation cannot exceed certain limits ; for at last the moral sentiments of mankind will revolt against the law, and render it inoperative. In a commercial country like England, where paper-money is in general use, the temptation to forgery being great, and the injury from it tremendous, it was thought advisable to punish that crime with death, till at length the disinclination to prosecute rendered the law a dead letter.

In judging of the merit of two actions, we compare the force displayed, and the utility of purpose, in the one case, with the same circumstances in the other case. And in this we may again remark the differ-

ence between law and moral sentiment, that the one looks more to the amount of direct utility, the other to the force displayed. The following instance will render this pretty clear. Suppose two persons who endanger their lives, the one for his country, the other to save only two or three individuals; which would be more highly rewarded by law? and which is the more virtuous? The former, we may suppose, is a general, who has risked his life for the defence of his native land; the latter a private and obscure individual, who, though an indifferent swimmer, has leapt into the water to save some people from drowning. The first of these may receive the substantial rewards of Marlborough or of Wellington, while the second shall have none; but is he the less virtuous? On the contrary, his virtue is more remarkable, not only because various self-regarding motives assist the one, such as desire of glory, fear of shame, and even the hope of more palpable reward, but also because the smallness of the object for which the other exposes his life proves a rare force of benevolence. The man who could perform this last action would certainly expose his life in battle in time of need; but he who could be brave in the field, when stimulated by example, and excited by the noise and bustle of war, might not be capable of an humble and unwitnessed act of self-devotedness.

However, self-devotedness, like everything else, may be carried too far. Thus, were a man who knew nothing of swimming to rush into the water to rescue one drowning individual, though some might praise, others would think that the risk was too great for the

object, that the man failed in what he owed to his own family and friends, and that such an act showed as much indifference to his own existence as regard for that of others, an indifference which implied either misery or folly.<sup>4</sup>

We must not confound virtue with innocence, nor yet with simple goodness. One who has indulged in no vice, but, at the same time, has never been exposed to temptation, is innocent; but he who overcomes it is alone virtuous. So, a man may be called good, without much pretensions to virtue, if, either from the outward circumstances in which he is placed, or from the original turn of his character, he has little temptation to evil. Thus, the same outward conduct may require much more virtue in one man than in another. We do make allowances for differences in outward circumstances, but as we cannot read the mind within, we are obliged to suppose that all men are nearly alike, accessible to the same temptations, and requiring the same strength to master them, though in reality they differ considerably in sensibility and passion, and require accordingly more or less force to preserve their rectitude. Nor is it to be de-

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<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, in the beginning of his *Life of Pelopidas*, tells us, that one day Cato the elder, hearing some people highly praise a man who showed an unbounded temerity in warlike actions, observed, *that there was a wide difference between respecting virtue and despising life*; a saying, as Plutarch remarks, full of wisdom and truth. He then tells a story of a soldier greatly admired for his bravery, while labouring under a secret disease, who, when cured, became much more cautious. This soldier was in the army of Antigonus.

sired that any difference should be made in our moral estimate of men on account of original differences of character; for, in that case, instead of endeavouring to curb his evil propensities, every one would plead native passion as an excuse for vicious conduct. But the case of the Deity shows very clearly the proper distinction between goodness and virtue. We say that the Almighty is good, but we never style him virtuous. Why so? Because virtue always supposes the existence, or at least the possibility of temptation to the contrary, that is, to vice, and consequently implies the exercise of mental force to resist such temptation; whereas we cannot suppose the Deity to be ever tempted to evil. We therefore call him good, not virtuous. Virtue belongs only to fallible beings neither wholly good nor wholly bad.

In Mackintosh's "Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy," an opinion occurs apparently opposed to the above conception of virtue, and therefore deserving some consideration. He says, "It was excellently observed by Aristotle, that a man is not commended as *temperate* so long as it costs him efforts of self-denial to persevere in the practice of temperance, but only when *he prefers that virtue for its own sake*. He is not meek, nor brave, as long as the most vigorous self-command is necessary to bridle his anger or his fear."<sup>5</sup> To this I answer, that when a man has at last formed a habit of temperance, meekness, or bravery, and practises them without effort, his virtue is indeed perfected; but this habit could

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<sup>5</sup> Dissertation : General Remarks, p. 376.

not have been acquired without a long probation and repeated efforts of self-denial, and therein lies his merit. His conduct supposes a victory over self, either by a past or a present struggle; and if the struggle be now over, the victory is complete, and therefore the virtue greater.

Those who are born with strong tendencies to intemperance, anger, or fear, have certainly more merit in conquering such tendencies than they who by nature are neither very intemperate, wrathful, nor timorous; but as we cannot read the mind, nor well distinguish natural from acquired propensities, and as, moreover, it would be highly dangerous to allow that native passion was an excuse for crime, (for every one would make that excuse,) therefore we must put all men on a level, and consider their virtue similar where outward circumstances are the same.

I may remark that the view here given of virtue, is in perfect conformity with the Scriptures, which represent this life as a state of warfare and probation, which necessarily demand mental force. We are also told in the epistle to the Romans,<sup>6</sup> that "love is the fulfilling of the law," whereby the superiority of the social to the self-regarding virtues is pointed out. In the gospel, the whole of moral duty is summed up in this comprehensive maxim, "that we should love our neighbour as ourselves," a consummation, as every one will allow, of the utmost difficulty, but towards which we may approximate. We are not told to love virtue or other such abstractions *for their own sake*, but our neighbour.

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<sup>6</sup> Chap. xiii. 10.

But, it may now be asked, what is that mental force which constitutes an essential element of virtue? The phrase, it may be thought, is not sufficiently precise; can we then translate it into more definite language?

By mental force we mean then *a firm desire*. This firm desire is exercised in two ways; first, in restraining us from doing something; secondly, in impelling us to do something. Thus, it acts alternately as a *curb* and as a *spur*.

Accordingly, virtue may be defined to consist in *an inflexible desire or will to pursue our own ultimate good, and that of others, whatever self-denial or self-sacrifice may be required*.

This is the most correct definition of virtue, for it really consists in these two elements, a purpose useful on the whole, and an inflexible will in pursuing it; while the criterion or test of this firmness of purpose is the degree of self-denial that may be manifested. For, as it is not in our power directly to know that will, we can judge of it only by the sacrifices that appear to be made.

Hence we may frame another definition of virtue not so accurate, but more popular, and better adapted for ordinary application, and may say that virtue consists in *self-denial or self-sacrifice with a view to an ultimate and greater good either to ourselves or others*. This definition, it is evident, is not so exact as the former, because it makes virtue to consist not in the mental state itself, as in strictness it ought, but in the test or criterion by which alone that state can be divined. In practice, however, it will probably be found more useful, for this very reason, that



it holds to signs or effects which are better known than the causes whence they spring.

Should the word *good* in the above definition be thought not sufficiently definite, it may be replaced by that of *happiness*.

If such be the proper definition of virtue, then vice consists in its opposite, or in the want of that inflexible will to pursue what is ultimately good for ourselves and others, in spite of present inconvenience or present temptation. This want or deficiency may or may not be accompanied with positive malevolence or ill-will ; and therefore malevolence is not essential to vice, though it may be an aggravation thereof. By far the greater part of the misery caused by vice, arises not from positive ill-will, whether in the form of anger, resentment, or revenge, but from the want of a sufficient desire for our own ultimate advantage, or for the good of others ; in other words, from too great indifference to our permanent interest, or to the welfare of our neighbour. In most cases where this welfare is sacrificed, it is not with a view to unhappiness, but in spite of it ; for if the guilty person could obtain his selfish end without injuring another, he would generally be better pleased.

Nor is resentment always blameable. On the contrary, it may be highly moral, as in moral indignation against a criminal, or in the milder form of moral disapprobation, which always comprises some ill-will towards a vicious person. As, to love virtue, is in truth to love the virtuous, for the first is a mere abstraction which cannot be the object of a real affection ; so, to hate vice, is properly to hate the

vicious. The one feeling is quite as essential to morals as the other, and both are eminently useful, as we have seen in the preceding chapter. Thus, as there may be abundance of vice without any malevolence, so there may be malevolence without vice ; and, therefore, mere hatred or ill-will is no characteristic.<sup>6</sup>

The view here given of virtue, not only perfectly agrees with all that commonly goes under that name among us, as well as with all which is morally approved of by mankind in general, under whatsoever name ; but it alone affords a rational ground of approbation. Since, at bottom, “nothing can be of consequence to mankind or any creature, but happiness,” as Bishop Butler has well observed, therefore, whatever tends to happiness ought to be promoted.

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<sup>6</sup> Rochefoucauld has said, “*La faiblesse est plus opposée à la vertu, que le vice.*” This maxim is somewhat ambiguous ; but in the main it seems to coincide with the above view, which makes vice to consist in the weakness of good principles of conduct, not in positive ill-will, which is blameable only when it supposes that weakness. Dislike to a vicious individual, implies not indifference to mankind in general, but just the contrary.

I may here remark an inconsistency which Butler has fallen into in his otherwise excellent Sermon on Resentment ; for while he is forced to allow that resentment may be justifiable, and that it serves highly useful purposes, he condemns all exercise thereof. But if the feeling be justifiable, surely we are justified in showing it by look, gesture, word, or deed. What consummate self-command, not to say hypocrisy, would it require to subdue all these outward indications, any one of which may wound the guilty ? And, if we could subdue them, would not the final cause or purpose of resentment be thus baffled ? for it was intended as a check to crime.

Consequently, utility, or a tendency to happiness, is a rational ground of preferring one disposition or one action to another, and of encouraging it by all means in our power, in particular, by moral approbation expressed by look, gesture, word, or deed. But how shall this approbation be applied to useful actions, so as to secure the greatest amount of benefit?

At first sight, it might appear, that the more useful the action the more we ought to approve; but on more mature reflection, this rule will be found fallacious. When men wish any one to pursue a line of conduct to which he is naturally prone, they seldom think it necessary to urge him by additional motives, but leave him to his own strong tendency, reserving their arguments and counsels for other cases where his inclination may be at variance with their own. In short, they do not take pains for no purpose, nor by intermeddling unnecessarily weaken their influence where it may be really required. It is on this principle that the mode in which moral approbation is applied to dispositions and actions, as above stated, may be rationally justified. Where the natural tendency of man to any actions is strong, these are never highly commended, however useful they may be; but where natural inclination is weak, any useful act proceeding therefrom meets with our warm approval. Thus, actions springing from self-love,<sup>7</sup> are in general less praised than those which arise from benevolence, and while self-indulgence is at best only inno-

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<sup>7</sup> It is perhaps hardly necessary to remind the reader, that the term *self-love*, as used throughout this work, includes the whole assemblage of the self-regarding desires. It is convenient to have

cent, self-command is called virtue. This is all perfectly rational, for why should we encourage self-love, at least, immediate self-love, which is generally quite strong enough ; and why should we not encourage benevolence, which is rarely if ever too strong ? To strengthen what is apt to be weak, not that which is already powerful, is surely agreeable to common sense.

If all men had by nature those firm desires which are conducive to their own happiness, and to that of others, there would evidently be no occasion for moral sentiment, and for terms of approbation or disapprobation. And as in that case, such sentiment and such terms could serve no purpose, we may fairly infer that they would not have existed ; for nothing has been made in vain. The terms, no doubt, are framed by man, but the sentiments come from nature. Terms of approbation are as much a proof of our mixed nature as terms of disapprobation ; for the one supposes the possibility of the other, and both are exactly adapted to a state where good and ill exist together, and to none else. Suppose man altogether good, and he has no occasion for encouragement or discouragement ; suppose him utterly bad, and he could not be deterred from evil, or prompted to the contrary, by moral approval or disapproval. And, as on either of these suppositions, moral praise and blame would have been quite thrown away, we may presume that they would have been unknown, and vice or virtue never heard of.

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a general term to comprehend all these, and self-love is the only one we possess. But it must not be confounded with the *amour-propre* of the French, which is a modification of pride.

We may now remark that the conclusion here arrived at by reasoning from the final cause or purpose of moral sentiment, perfectly coincides with the one formerly drawn from reflecting on the influence of rarity, or the want of it, on the human mind. It was shown that if acts, now called virtuous, were to become as common as those which a man now performs every day for his own pleasure and convenience, they would cease to be applauded or styled virtuous ; and in like manner, that if vice were universally practised, it would no longer be so called, or at least, that the word would no longer express condemnation. Thus, moral sentiment, moral terms of praise and blame, the ideas of virtue and vice, belong essentially to an imperfect being like man, neither altogether good nor altogether bad, and to no other being whatsoever. A conclusion which has been arrived at by two different ways, quite independent of each other, can hardly fail to be well founded.

Moreover, this conclusion follows immediately from the nature of virtue, as determined from experience and reason, and above explained ; for if virtue suppose the existence of temptations to evil, as well as the conquest over them, it necessarily implies a mixed state of good and ill, and is inconsistent with any other.

I may also remark that the view here given of virtue, perfectly agrees with our theory as to the origin of moral sentiment. This we traced to two causes, the utility and rarity of dispositions or actions ; while virtue is said to consist in utility of purpose, combined with an inflexible desire or will to overcome

all difficulty that may stand in the way of that purpose. But such firmness of purpose is of course very rare in the highest degree, and rare even in a lesser degree; and therefore in a virtuous action there is necessarily both utility and rarity.

These two causes suffice to account for the origin of moral sentiment, but they do not at first seem enough to justify our approbation; for we have just seen that the mere utility of an action is not an adequate reason for approving it, and still less is mere rarity. But when we consider that rarity supposes difficulty, and that difficulty implies the natural weakness of certain mental principles of action, then we conceive that we are justified in approving an useful and rare action, because by so doing we assist those principles by a new sanction, and so lessen the difficulty. For sentiments of approbation and disapprobation felt and expressed, may be properly considered as a force in reserve to be brought forward in time of need, where other forces fail, but not to be lavished without necessity. Thus, though neither utility alone, nor rarity alone is a rational ground of approval, nor even the two together at first sight, yet, as the two necessarily imply both utility and a difficulty overcome, or in other words, both utility and an exercise of mental force, which are rational grounds of approval, therefore moral sentiment based on utility and rarity must be allowed to be well founded.<sup>8</sup>

To be derived from reason is one thing, to be conformable thereto, another. Thus, when we say, that

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<sup>8</sup> See pp. 489, 490.

moral sentiment springs from the view of utility and rarity, we allow that it does not arise solely from reason; but now we perceive that when it springs as here stated, it is in perfect agreement with that faculty.

Towards the conclusion of the last chapter, we remarked that although moral sentiment must exist before men could perceive its useful tendency, yet, supposing it already arisen, this perception might act as a secondary cause of its diffusion and regulation. In like manner, though rarity by its immediate influence on the mind, and without the aid of calculation, makes us praise some actions much more than others, which may be equally useful; yet when we come to see why it should be so, this knowledge may become a secondary cause leading to the same effect. So, the uneasiness of hunger first gives rise to the desire of food, but the knowledge afterwards acquired, that food is necessary to sustain our bodies, affords an additional motive for eating. Surely men must soon have perceived that it was foolish to praise actions however useful, which every one without such praise is strongly prompted to perform, and wise to magnify those to which each is less inclined. Whenever this idea occurs, it must teach us, before we approve, to consider not merely the utility of actions, but also the mental obstacles that are commonly opposed to their performance.

Having now laid the foundations of morals, or fixed that fundamental rule which is to be consulted on all doubtful occasions, in order to determine the degree of virtue or moral merit, and regulate our sentiments

accordingly, we shall be able to define certain words of constant use in ethical science, as well as in daily life. Such are, right, wrong, ought, and ought not, duty, and moral obligation, which all refer to the same thing. *Right* and *wrong*, *ought* and *ought not*, have two different significations, a proximate and an ultimate, which in the main coincide. In general they signify agreement or disagreement with a general rule ; but, in the first instance, and in the usual commerce of mankind, they mean agreement or disagreement with a proximate rule of morality, such as the rules of justice and temperance. Ultimately, however, they imply conformity or non-conformity with the fundamental rule of morality, as here described. These significations in the main coincide, for proximate rules of morality are based upon the fundamental, and have been formed gradually in the course of ages by means of our common faculties, and for daily application, since the fundamental rule is too general for constant use. As the latter is of such a nature as best to secure the general well-being of mankind, so *right* and *wrong* must mean at bottom what is agreeable or contrary to the same, though more immediately they refer only to a proximate rule, which is supposed to be based on the fundamental. Therefore the above words do not mean merely *useful* or *injurious* in the common acceptation of these terms, but conformity or non conformity with a general rule, whether proximate or ultimate, which is conceived to agree with a far-sighted and comprehensive view of the real happiness of man.

When we consider that nothing is of any real con-



sequence to mankind but happiness, it seems evident, that to the question, Why *ought* I, or *ought* I not to do so and so, or Why is it *right* or *wrong*, no satisfactory answer can be given which may not ultimately be resolved into a tendency to happiness or misery. But it is quite a different thing to affirm, that the words, as commonly used, directly refer to happiness. Were a person to determine within himself never to approve or disapprove of any action, without a distinct view of its beneficial or injurious consequences, there can be no doubt that he would fall into the grossest errors; for this simple reason, that these consequences are far too numerous and too latent to be seen at once by any individual, however clear-sighted, and if not seen at once, the occasion for acting is gone. Therefore proximate rules are absolutely necessary to give rapidity to our moral judgment; and as these have been formed in the long course of ages by the universal concurrence of mankind, and from the widest experience, they are more to be relied on than the decisions of any individual, however talented. It has been well said, that there is one more to be trusted than the deepest philosopher, and that is all mankind. In questions of morals and real life, at least, the universal sense of men, as expressed in proximate rules of conduct, is, in general, a far surer guide than the calculations of any moralist, drawn from the application of a very general rule to each particular case, without the aid of intermediate principles. These intermediate principles may not always be well-founded, and may be misapplied, and, therefore, the fundamental rule must

be occasionally consulted in order to reform them ; but so long as they do exist, *right*, in the popular sense will mean conformity to those rules, and *right*, in a philosophical sense, will signify conformity to that fundamental rule which comprehends them all.

This sense of the word *right*, is as applicable to politics as to morals. In the common use of the term, it does not refer directly to happiness nor yet to vulgar utility ; but signifies conformity to a general and established rule or law of the land. Thus we say that the House of Commons has a right to refuse the supplies, as well as to propose all money bills ; that the House of Lords has the right of rejecting, but not of modifying them ; that the King has the right of veto ; and the three powers together the right of legislation. In all these cases, right means conformity to that assemblage of important laws, which together compose the constitution. So when we say that ten pound householders have a right to vote for members of parliament, we mean that they can do so without violating the law of election ; though before the Reform bill they had no such right, because the law was different. The same holds true in every other case. No doubt, these rules or laws are supposed to be framed with a view to general utility, and in a philosophical sense they are *right* only so far as they are truly agreeable to the same. But, in a popular, that is in the common sense, they refer directly to the law, not to its utility. If the law be really useful, then the popular and philosophical sense in the main coincide ; but if it be injurious, then there is division between the two, and what is

legally right may not be so morally. Still, so long as the law exists, it may be our duty to obey it, for, no government could subsist if men were considered justified in disobeying laws because they could not see their utility ; since the example thus shown by the sincere, would be followed by the insincere who happened to dislike the law from private motives. Occasions, indeed, may occur, where resistance to the law is not only blameless, but praiseworthy, as where it has been passed without the forms required by a primary law of the constitution, and is therefore no law at all, or where it is notoriously unjust. Thus, resistance to the ordinances of Charles X. of France, was *right*, because those ordinances were at variance with the fundamental constitution of the monarchy. In Ireland, the payment of tithes was resisted from a general belief in the injustice of that tax. Wherever, in short, law is notoriously opposed to the fundamental rule of utility, resistance to power may become a moral duty ; for law is binding only on that ground.

It is scarcely necessary to remark, that as law does not pretend to regulate everything, but only to check palpable acts of injustice, many acts, which are not wrong *legally*, may be so *morally*. Thus, when a certain Duke said that he had a right to turn out those tenants who would not vote for his candidate, in a legal sense he spoke correctly, though in so acting he committed a glaring immorality. The law does not prevent a man from dismissing every person on his estate and converting it into a waste, but in so doing would he be blameless ?

The analogy of politics may shew us the importance of proximate rules of morality. As no man is so absurd as to pretend that the general rule of utility is sufficient to replace all less general rules of law and government, so none should imagine that the fundamental rule of virtue can stand in stead of less comprehensive principles. Were we to attempt to determine the moral merit of actions, with no other rule than their greater or less tendency to happiness, combined with the force displayed, we should often be sadly at a loss from the difficulty of knowing the real tendency, and our decisions would probably be as fluctuating and contradictory as those of judges left to administer justice without the aid of law.

It must be allowed, however, that men are rather too fond of forming intermediate rules to save themselves the trouble of constantly referring to first principles. Thus, the dogma of the sovereignty of the people has been raised by some into a principle on which all government ought to be founded. Unless it be supposed that such sovereignty is favourable to good government in the first instance, and ultimately to the national happiness, the principle rests on no basis; and if it be supposed, it ought first to be proved. That the sovereignty of all, nominally of the high and learned as well as of the low and ignorant, but really of the latter who form the immense majority, is the best possible government, is surely a principle by no means self-evident, and if not self-evident, it is too pregnant with consequences to be received without irresistible proof.

Some again make liberty a natural right; but it

cannot be absolute liberty, for the unlimited liberty of one in a society would be the utter servitude of all others. Therefore the degree of liberty that can be permitted, or in other words, that is right, must be determined by general utility. Self-defence may more properly be called a right, for it is clearly for the common advantage that every man should defend his life in time of need.

Since proximate rules, whether in morals or in politics, are our common guides in life, it is not surprising that men should become greatly attached to them from association, and that sometimes they should honour them even more than the end which they are meant to serve. We have before remarked, that the substitution of the means for the end is one of the most general tendencies of human nature. In the case of morals, this tendency has gone so far as to make some men suppose that, come what may, a general rule ought never to be broken. Hence the maxim *Fiat Justitia, ruat Cælum*, a maxim which would be most mischievous were it not absurd. To suppose that justice and general destruction can ever be connected, is ridiculous; but if they could, which ought we to sacrifice, an abstraction or a reality? or which is the greater evil, apparent inconsistency in theory, or ruin in practice? or which is preferable, the means, or the end to be obtained by those means? It is evident that the latter are valuable, so far as they tend to the former, and no farther, so that when the two are opposed, we cannot doubt which to sacrifice.

Another opinion must here be noticed. Some there

are who maintain, that no action deserves to be called *virtuous* unless it proceed from *sense of duty*.<sup>9</sup> In order to know what to think of this opinion, it is necessary to determine what is meant by sense of duty, for the phrase is by no means clear. Since all actions proceed from motives, if sense of duty be a principle of action, it must comprehend some motive; and since a motive is nothing but a desire leading to action, therefore sense of duty must contain some desire, social or self-regarding. If then it be supposed that sense of duty contains some one peculiar desire, which alone is a source of virtue, let it be pointed out. Does it belong to the social or to the self-regarding class? If to the former, then no action is virtuous which springs not from some form of benevolence; if to the latter, then none is virtuous which proceeds not from some modification of self-love. But both these opinions are not only refuted in the present work,<sup>10</sup> but are contrary to the common sense of mankind. Of the four cardinal virtues, Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice, three relate to self, and spring from self-regarding motives; one relates to others. Shall we say that the motive involved in sense of duty is a regard to the general but proximate rules of morality? This seems to be at least the *immediate* principle of action. We have seen that we become greatly attached to these rules from association, so as at last to love them, as it were, for

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<sup>9</sup> Dr. Chalmers professes this opinion in his *Sketches of Moral and Mental Philosophy*, Ch. V.

<sup>10</sup> See in particular Chap. IV. of this Part.

their own sake. Therefore, to observe the rules, becomes a strong desire and a permanent motive to action. But these rules are really valuable only on account of the end for which they were intended, the happiness of ourselves and others. Is it not then absurd to say, that such actions alone are virtuous which proceed from sense of duty, that is, from a regard to the proximate rules of morality ; while those are void of merit which spring directly from benevolence, and tend to the ultimate object of all rules, the happiness of the species ?

But the *ultimate* motive comprised in sense of duty, appears to be desire of self-approbation, the approbation of conscience. According to this view of the above opinion, no actions deserve to be called virtuous, - but those which spring from the desire of self-approbation. Hence it would follow, that an action arising from pure benevolence, and requiring the greatest sacrifice of time, ease, and private gratification, cannot be virtuous ! Such an opinion, when once understood, is already refuted. Assuredly no action can be virtuous which is disapproved by the conscience of the actor ; but it is quite another thing to assert that none can be virtuous unless performed with a direct view to self-approval. Self-satisfaction never fails to accompany or follow virtuous deeds, and is in truth one of their principal rewards ; but it need not be a motive to their performance, still less the only motive. In truth, men must have been virtuous before they felt that inward satisfaction which flows from being so ; and, therefore, virtue is anterior to self-approbation, and independent of sense of

duty as the moving principle. This comes in afterwards as an useful auxiliary, but cannot supersede those primary principles from which virtue took its origin. Unless certain acts, especially those proceeding from benevolent motives, had previously been virtuous, the sense of duty never could have been felt; and in that case, it could neither engender a motive, nor produce an action.<sup>11</sup>

I cannot conclude this Chapter without referring to the opinions of a celebrated divine, whose work on moral philosophy is so highly thought of as even to be made a text book in one of our universities. By considering the opinions of that author on virtue and moral obligation, I hope to remove any doubts that may still remain as to the accuracy of the view here given.

I have said that moral obligation, duty, right, all mean the same thing; that we are morally obliged, that it is our duty, that it is right, to act agreeably to a general rule of morality, supposing that rule to be framed so as to conduce to the general well-being. These words, in the first instance, mean conformity with a rule, but the ultimate reason for maintaining the rule, is, that it is necessary to human happiness. Beyond this we cannot go, and it is absurd to ask for any reason beyond, for the desirability of happi-

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<sup>11</sup> Hume has said, "In short, it may be established as an undoubted maxim, *that no action can be virtuous or morally good, unless there be in human nature some motive to produce it, distinct from the sense of its morality.*" See "A Treatise of Human Nature," Book III. Part II. Sect. 1, where this maxim is proved.



ness is self-evident. Were any one to turn round and ask, Why am I obliged to act agreeably to the general happiness? the question would be purely personal and particular, not implying any doubt whether general happiness were a good, but simply meaning, what motives have *I* to pursue the same, in cases where private and public interest seem to clash. The enquirer must allow his own ultimate happiness to be a real good, and if he be a man of common sense and common feeling, he must confess that the general happiness is so too, as well as all rules that tend towards it, though he may doubt whether it be for his private interest always to observe them. He does not call in question the foundation of morals as here laid down, but allowing that foundation to be sound, hesitates, whether a moral conduct towards others be invariably for his own advantage. The proper answer to his question will then be, to point out the motives to the practice of virtue, as will be done in a subsequent Chapter. In the mean time, if his own heart do not inform him that to do good to others is his true interest, he may be told that the purpose of moral sentiment and of moral rules is to amend that heart, to encourage benevolence, and assist it by other motives different from benevolence, but coinciding with it in tendency. In short, the purpose of morals is to render each man's private interest the same as the general, and that in two ways; first, by the direct operation of the sanction of praise and blame; secondly, by the influence of that sanction in encouraging a benevolent disposition, whereby the good of others becomes a man's own happiness.

However rational the above account of the foundation of morals may seem, it would not have satisfied Paley; “Why am I obliged to keep my word?” asks he, “Because it is right, says one—Because it is agreeable to the fitness of things, says another.—Because it is conformable to reason and nature, says a third.—Because it is conformable to truth, says a fourth.—Because it promotes the public good, says a fifth.—Because it is required by the will of God, concludes a sixth.” He then goes on to observe, FIRST, “that all these accounts ultimately coincide, for all express or imply tendency to the general happiness as the reason why I am obliged to keep my word:” SECONDLY, “that these answers all leave the matter *short*; for the inquirer may turn round upon his teacher with a second question, in which he will expect to be satisfied, namely, *Why* am I obliged to do what is right; to act agreeably to the fitness of things; to conform to reason, nature, or truth; to promote the public good, or to obey the will of God?”

If the account which I have above given be correct, the question, why am I obliged to promote the public good? is absurd, if by it be expressed a doubt as to whether the public good be desirable in the eyes of a man of common sense and common feeling; and if it imply no doubt on this point, it can mean only, what motives have *I* to pursue the public good, where it seems at variance with my own? This is certainly a rational question; but it is nothing to the present purpose, which is to determine not what *I*, an individual, may deem a sufficient mo-

tive for giving up any private gratification ; but what all men of common sense and feeling would pronounce to be a self-evident reason for acting, a reason which always tends to create a motive, and always would actually create one, did no private reason and private motive interfere. Every one would pursue the public good if he could do so without any injury or any inconvenience to himself, and if so, the public good must appear to us desirable *on its own account*. It is then a self-evident good, and it does not cease to be thought so even by those who sacrifice it to their own supposed advantage. But, to see what errors men fall into when they attempt to deduce first principles from something else, we have only to follow Paley in his endeavour to answer the above question, Why am I obliged to keep my word? which has been resolved into, *Why am I obliged to promote the public good?* “A man,” says he, “is said to be obliged *when he is urged by a violent motive resulting from the command of another.*” Having given this definition of *obliged*, he thence draws his final answer to the question, Why am I *obliged* to keep my word? “Because I am urged to do so by a violent motive, (namely, the expectation of being after this life rewarded, if I do, or punished for it, if I do not,) resulting from the command of another (namely of God).”

From this account it would follow, that all pagans or unbelievers, whether of the ancient or modern world, all who either have no faith in another life, or no settled belief in a future state of rewards and punishments, are *not* obliged to keep their word ;

a conclusion so monstrous as to prove irresistibly the absurdity of the premises.<sup>12</sup>

Would Paley or any other contend that it is not a man's *Duty* to keep his word, independently of all consideration of reward and punishment in a future state? And if it be his duty, then he is morally obliged, for these words mean the same thing. Paley goes on to observe that "moral obligation is like all other obligations, and *obligation* is nothing more than an *inducement* of sufficient strength; and resulting, in some way, from the command of another." But moral obligation is *not* like all other obligations; the latter arising from any view of interest, the former from a view of the ultimate good, whether of ourselves or others. Any strong motive may *induce* us to perform an action, but nothing but the ultimate good of ourselves or others can *oblige* us morally. Even to the idea of an ordinary obligation, command seems not necessary, and assuredly not to moral obligation, for unless an action were previously moral, a command could not make it so. The command merely acknowledges the obligation, and may add to it an additional sanction; but instead of constituting the duty, supposes it already to exist. The revealed Will of God does not make that moral which was not so before, but supposing morality to have an independent exist-

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<sup>12</sup> Mr. Whewell has well observed; "If Paley had stated his question in the simpler form; Why *ought* I to keep my word? he would have had before him a problem more to the purpose of moral philosophy, and one to which his answer would have been palpably inapplicable." Preface to Mackintosh's Dissertation.

ence, and that men can see it by the light of nature, though that light may be obscured, Revelation sheds a lustre where wanting, and enforces the practice of virtue by a religious sanction. Did morality entirely depend upon the command, then we could not judge whether a professed revelation were agreeable to morality or not, and therefore there could be no internal evidence of its credibility. An action in itself innocent, may indeed assume a moral nature, when commanded by one whom it is our *Duty* to obey; but then the command supposes the duty of obedience already to exist. This, in the first instance, must depend upon circumstances quite independent of command, for command is no reason. When an officer orders a soldier to march, to march becomes the soldier's duty, only because it was previously his duty to obey. So it is the duty of a son, in general, to obey a father, and therefore the particular injunctions of the latter, so far as innocent, ought to be attended to. In like manner, positive institutions of religion, such as the Sabbath, may become duties, if commanded by God, whom we are previously bound to obey.

Pursuing the same line of argument, Paley remarks, that "there is always understood to be a difference between an act of *Prudence* and an act of *Duty*." He then inquires wherein that difference consists, and determines that "the difference, and the only difference, is this: That in the one case we consider what we shall gain or lose in the present world; in the other case, we consider also what we shall gain or lose in the world to come." But, the truth is, that

Prudence is a duty ; though, since it looks entirely to self, a failure in Prudence is not esteemed so great a vice as a failure in veracity or honesty, which regard others. However, a very imprudent man is always thought morally culpable.

Paley's definition of virtue corresponds to his account of moral obligation, and the one is as faulty as the other. "Virtue is," says he, "*the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness.*" According to which definition," he continues, "*the good of mankind* is the subject ; the *will of God* the rule ; and *everlasting happiness* the motive, of human virtue."

Now it may be remarked in the first place, that what he calls the "subject" and the "rule," are not two things, but one ; for he himself observes a little further on, that the only way by which we can know what is the will of God, is by considering what is good for man. Again, it would seem that the phrase "in obedience to the will of God," meant that a wish to obey God was the proper motive of virtue, were it not that the last clause assigns everlasting happiness as that motive. Assuredly the expectation of future reward or punishment is a great additional sanction to morality, but to affirm that it is absolutely essential to virtue, and the only moral motive, to the exclusion even of Benevolence, is at variance with common sense. According to this view, no ancient pagan could have been virtuous, not only unless he believed in a future state of rewards and punishments, but also unless those actions which we are wont to approve and admire, proceeded from a hope in futurity.

Cato has ever been esteemed a model of virtue ; but, according to Paley, improperly, if he did not firmly believe in a future state ; and if moreover the desire of everlasting happiness were not his ruling motive. Though Paley in general gives proofs, if not of metaphysical acuteness, at least of sound judgment, yet in the present instance he has made a statement as opposed to the notions of mankind as the finest system that ever was spun by crazy theorist. It may be safely affirmed that even the belief of Berkeley in the non-existence of matter, is not more at variance with common sense than the above definition of virtue ; and common sense is a far surer guide in morality than in metaphysics. Virtue is not confined to one motive, but admits of many ; though were we to pronounce one in particular more moral than another, it would certainly be Benevolence, rather than any form of self-love. But according to the definition of Paley, if Benevolence be the motive, there is no virtue.

The belief in a future state, and in rewards and punishments, has certainly a great and beneficial influence on the conduct of men in the present life ; but it is quite a different thing to maintain that the essence of virtue lies in the desire of happiness hereafter. This desire encourages good deeds, both directly and indirectly ; first, as it actually looks to the reward, secondly, as it promotes the disposition of mind necessary to receive that reward. The Scriptures do certainly hold out the prospect of future happiness, but in order to obtain it we must love God and our neighbour ; and therefore we are prompted

to cultivate Piety and Benevolence. Nor let any one say that these are natural gifts, which can neither be lost nor improved, for the contrary is notorious. The rewards and punishments of futurity are, therefore, doubly valuable, for they not only act as immediate dissuasives to vice, but they induce us to cultivate a virtuous disposition, which is its own reward, and a blessing to all within its influence.



## CHAPTER IV.

## ON THE PROPER OBJECT OF MORAL APPROBATION.

HAVING fixed, in the preceding chapter, the essential characters of virtue, we shall not be at a loss to determine the proper object of moral approbation. In considering any human action, two things demand our attention, the outward effects produced, and the causes whence they spring. The former, because they are outward, may be traced with comparative ease, at least the immediate effects ; but the latter, being inward, can be known with certainty only to the individual himself. Still, those effects are valuable as signs from which we may infer the cause with more or less probability. Since, then, a human action consists of two parts, one seated in the mind of the agent, the other without that mind, the first question is, which of these two is the proper object of moral approbation ?

What is an outward action without reference to its cause ? It is a series of changes which may be pronounced advantageous, harmless, or hurtful to man, like the actions of the lower animals, or the movements in inanimate matter, but which cannot be either approved or disapproved, because in themselves they are not endued with reason and feeling. None but beings like ourselves, rational and sensitive, can rouse approbation or disapprobation, as we know by experience, and as we might infer with-

out direct experience, supposing ourselves first to be acquainted with the final cause of moral sentiment. If the purpose of such sentiment be to encourage beneficial and discourage hurtful actions, then it can fulfil its purpose only when applied to creatures sensitive and rational; for none other can feel pleasure or pain on account of praise or blame, and can direct their conduct so as to secure the one and avoid the other. Hence it is evident that the outward part of an action cannot be the proper object of moral approbation.

In order to determine this object, we must therefore have recourse to the inward part of an action or the state of mind in which it originates. Now there are various circumstances connected with this mental state, which are sometimes made the objects of praise and blame, properly or improperly, and which therefore demand our attention. These are the Motive, the Intention, the Disposition. Which then of the three is the proper object of moral sentiment?

With regard to motives, it follows from the whole of the preceding inquiry, that no motive or class of motives can be called universally bad. We have every reason to believe that no desire, and therefore no motive has been given in vain, but that all are subservient to some useful purpose. That man would indeed be foolish and presumptuous, who should wish to annihilate any of the self-regarding desires, because they sometimes, nay, frequently lead to ill. If any desire might be considered as an exception, it would certainly be that which looks directly not to the good of self but to the evil of others. But we have seen that ill-will is not only necessary at times

for self-protection, and therefore allowable, but that it is even essential to morality, since it forms an element of moral indignation, and even of moral disapprobation. If we be virtuous, we must dislike the vicious. And if even malevolence may be justified by the circumstances, surely no other desire can be universally blameable.

Nor can any motive be called invariably good. Of the self-regarding desires and motives, any one may be abused and may injure not only others but even ourselves, as every person will allow. And even benevolence is not universally good, for ill-judged benevolence may do much harm, and if that harm could have been foreseen by ordinary reflection, the individual is not praiseworthy. In such a case we accuse him either of folly or weakness, of folly, if the consequences were not perceived, of weakness, if perceived, and yet not avoided. Therefore a benevolent motive is not sufficient for virtue ; and though from its general tendency we may be allowed in popular language to call it good, we must remember that the term is merely relative. Since the tendency of no motive is invariably good or bad, and since two actions proceeding from the same motive, may be very different in character, the one praiseworthy or innocent, the other blameable, it follows that the motive alone cannot be the proper object of moral approbation. It may, indeed, serve along with other circumstances to fix the real nature of the action and so to regulate our sentiments, but it is not alone sufficient.

Dismissing the Motive, what shall we say of the

Intention? Before we can determine whether this be the proper object of moral approbation, we must know what it really is.

Whatever the motive to any action may be, many acts are generally required before the ultimate end can be attained, and each of these as subservient to the end, must itself be an object of volition, or in other words must be *intended*. If the motive be desire of wealth, how many preliminary steps must be taken, how much labour must be undergone, how many changes must be willed before the desired fortune can be made! Thus an intention is nothing more than a secondary desire arising from a primary; and if a primary desire or motive be not the proper object of moral approbation; neither can a secondary. Assuredly, in estimating the morality of actions, intention is a circumstance of great importance; but, that it is not alone enough to determine their character, will appear from the following considerations. First, in two actions universally allowed to be morally different, the intention may be the same. Thus, when one man murders another in order to get his purse, we look upon the agent with horror; but when the judge condemns the criminal to be executed, we think that he has done his duty, though the death of a fellow-creature is intended in this case as much as in the other. Again, when we hear of a person who, by charity towards the poor and generosity towards his friends, shows his intention to do good, we are strongly inclined to praise him; but when we are told that he scatters his bounty carelessly and promiscuously, without reflection or discrimination, our

sentiments are greatly modified ; and should we be further informed that he does not pay his debts, and that the means of his liberality are really withdrawn from others, our praise would be turned into blame. From these instances, it appears that intention alone, whether of good or evil, is not sufficient to determine the character of actions.

Secondly, though no action can be praiseworthy in which the good was not willed or intended, yet many actions may be highly culpable where the evil produced by them was not at all intentional. Heedlessness and indifference to others, may be quite as destructive and quite as criminal as the direct intention of evil. For instance, Fieschi in letting off his infernal machine meant to kill the king only, or at most the king and his sons, and probably he would rather not have killed any one else, but as he must have known that many would certainly fall, he was quite as culpable as if he had willed their death. Such hard-hearted indifference to the miseries of fellow-creatures who had done him no sort of injury, is considered by every one as the very climax of guilt. Again, suppose a man engaged in shooting game along with many others, the guns being loaded with ball ; if he fire right and left, without caring whether he wound or kill his companions, he may become a murderer. Should he actually see another between himself and the game, and fire notwithstanding, and shoot him, he ought to be considered a worse man than if he had killed him from enmity ; for enmity is occasional, and generally limited to a few, whereas such an action would prove an habitual indifference

to mankind in general. And if an action where the evil was unintentional may be so highly culpable, then intention cannot be the proper object of moral sentiment.

Since neither the outward action, nor yet the motive alone, nor the nature of the intention, nor even its existence, can determine the character of the deed, and present a fit object for moral approbation, to what shall we have recourse? We must have recourse to the general state of mind as evinced by all these circumstances taken together; in other words, to the Disposition. Disposition signifies a mental habit or tendency to such and such thoughts and feelings rather than to others, and, like all habits, it is created or at least strengthened by custom or repetition. It is not a transient phenomenon which may rarely recur, but a permanent bias which influences the whole conduct; and therefore, to modify that becomes the grand object of moral discipline. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life," says Solomon; and by heart can be meant nothing but the moral disposition. If we change this, we change every thing, outward as well as inward, for it is the fountain of all. And how are we to change it but by education, that is, by early custom, and by the application of moral sentiment, whereby the habit may be formed, more easily in youth than in advanced life, but still possibly at any age. For by frequent custom a habit is generated, that is, a tendency to repetition, which in morals is called disposition; and therefore every good performed or evil omitted is advantageous, not only in the present,

but also because it leads to similar acts or similar omissions in future. In short, disposition is a permanent thing, is the source of all actions, and can be modified by praise or blame, and therefore it is the proper object of moral sentiment. When we talk of a virtuous action, we really mean an action that implies a virtuous disposition.

The intellectual character, on the contrary, is not a proper object of moral approbation ; first, because it is not immediately nor invariably connected with action ; for though the intellect may have remotely a great influence on conduct, yet the connection is not necessary ; and secondly, because the reason is much less subject to the will than the moral disposition. How far the latter may be changed by the exertions of others co-operating with our own is a question which admits not of an absolute solution ; but it is certain that it may be greatly modified, especially in early life. Should any think that the disposition of the adult admits of little alteration from voluntary endeavours, yet it must be allowed that the minds of the young are more pliant, and therefore praise and blame will have a direct effect upon them, as well as an indirect through their parents and guardians ; for however bad some parents may be, however pernicious their example, they seldom preach immorality to their offspring.

We shall now bring forward some instances to prove, that in the general estimation of mankind, the moral merit or demerit of an action depends entirely upon the disposition evinced, and not upon the amount of good or evil that may actually be produced.

The most general fact under this head is the different sentiments which men entertain in reference to political offenders and to private criminals. What proportion between the evil resulting from rebellion, and that from a common robbery or murder? Were we to judge by the amount of misery produced, which ought to be considered more criminal, a man like Thurtell, who assassinated one individual, or Frost, or Barbès, who spread alarm throughout populous districts, and caused the death of many? In Paris, during the insurrection of May, 1839, a hundred persons were killed and many more wounded; but does any one feel towards the ringleader Barbès as towards a common murderer?

But the strongest case in point is that of conquerors. Who would compare the limited evil produced by an ordinary malefactor with the wholesale destruction and dismay which attend the conqueror's march? Terror spread far and wide, provinces ravaged, towns sacked, the inhabitants driven from their homes to die of cold and want, twenty thousand men in the prime of life cut off in a few hours, others tortured by wounds or rendered cripples for life, such are the unvarying characters of conquest. But while we deplore the effects, do we detest their author as we do a common ruffian? *Are* Cæsar, Alexander, and Napoleon, put on a level with highwaymen and cut-throats? And if not, *ought* they to be so? That they are not so considered by men in general is certain; though a few moralists have said and written, that they and others such ought to be esteemed no better, nay, much worse than vulgar



and inglorious villains, because they were so much more mischievous. Whose opinion are we then to consider correct, the opinion of mankind in general, or that of a few moralists? Such is the question.

Since morality is the business of all, and comes home to the thoughts and feelings of every individual, unlike astronomy and chemistry, which are the peculiar province of a few, the presumption certainly is, that here the many are right.<sup>14</sup> But this general presumption in favour of the common sense of mankind may be overcome by particular arguments.

We have already had occasion to mention two circumstances which tend to modify the sentiments of mankind with respect to conquerors, the greatness and rarity of their achievements, which excite wonder, and the influence of general rules whereby qualities generally useful are admired, even when abused. Both of these circumstances produce their effect independently of reason, the one modifying our opinions through our emotions, the other through our conceptions as influenced by association. When courage and perseverance have long been associated with the idea of good, and hence with praise, it becomes very difficult to break that association, even when the result is evil. These two circumstances

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<sup>14</sup> “The general opinion of mankind has some authority in all cases; but in this of morals ’tis perfectly infallible.” Hume’s *Treatise of Human Nature*, Book iii. part ii. sect. ix. Again, sect. xi: “The practice of the world goes farther in teaching us the degrees of our duty than the most subtle philosophy that was ever yet invented.” Unless the opinion in question be nearly universal, this statement may be thought too strong.

may *account* for the favour shown to conquerors, but they do not *justify* that favour ; for a cause is not a moral reason. Making, then, every allowance for the influence of those circumstances, and granting that men are far too indulgent, nay, foolishly partial to conquerors, still the question remains, are they altogether in the wrong ? and ought we to consider Alexander and Napoleon only as scoundrels on a great scale ?

Taking the above individuals as a specimen of conquerors in general, I may ask what are the actions which persons chiefly dwell upon, who wish to produce an unfavourable impression with respect to such characters ? Do they dilate upon the murderous battles of Issus and Arbela, of Austerlitz, Jena and Wagram, and on the slaughtered thousands sacrificed to the conqueror's ambition ? Do they bring before our eyes the devastation of countries, the ruin of cities, the agonies of the dying, the wailing of widows and orphans ? Do they paint the young, the brave, the hopeful, the joy and support of age, the light of mothers' eyes, all laid low in an hour, that one may rise to glory ? Finally, do they represent France groaning under the merciless conscription, and drained of its ablest citizens, most of them to return no more, subdued by the frosts of Russia, if not by the sword of the enemy ? Are these the themes on which they love to dwell, who would wish to run down Alexander and Napoleon ? By no means. These may, indeed, be mentioned, but what they chiefly insist on is one or two particular instances of injury, such as, in the one case, the assassination of

Parmenion, the murder of Clitus, and of Callisthenes; in the other, the execution of the Duke of Enghien, and the supposed destruction of some sick prisoners in Syria. Instances such as these are thought to argue greater moral depravity than all the massacres of war put together.

And do they really argue greater moral depravity? and why? Are the sentiments of mankind in this case correct? and if so, on what principle?

One thing, at all events, is evident from the sentiments displayed in such cases, namely, that in the general estimation of mankind, the moral merit or demerit of an action depends not upon the amount of evil that may actually be produced, but on the mental disposition from which it is supposed to spring. That the fact is so, cannot be denied, though some would wish it otherwise. But the general sense of mankind is of great weight in morals, and this, as we perceive, confirms the doctrine above laid down, that disposition is the proper object of moral approbation. And if the reasons above given in support of that doctrine be sound, then they justify the general opinion of mankind in this particular: for we have said that disposition is the proper object of moral approbation, because it is a permanent thing, because it is the source of all actions, and because it can be modified by praise or blame. Finally, therefore, the general sense of mankind in making a distinction between political offenders or conquerors, and common malefactors, may be defended on this principle, that the disposition evinced, not the amount of good or evil actually produced, is the proper ob-

ject of moral approbation ; and that in spite of the greater immediate misery resulting from political crimes, a worse disposition may be shown by a single act of atrocity than by turbulence at home, or a spirit of aggression abroad.

In the case of political offenders, many circumstances may concur to diminish the guilt. Rebellion is certainly an extreme remedy for the ills of the political body ; but unless we maintain that men ought to submit to every tyranny, we must allow that rebellion may be justifiable ; and as no one can say exactly when obedience to authority ceases to be a duty, and as different but equally conscientious opinions may be formed upon that point, some may think they ought to resist, while others think they ought still to obey. Therefore, the political offender, however misguided, may be animated by a patriotic motive, and may consider the evils of rebellion as trifling, when compared with the end in view. Between the disposition evinced by a man of this sort, and by a common malefactor, the difference is wide indeed.

Various circumstances may also concur to diminish the guilt of conquerors. First, there may have been some positive provocation on the part of the enemy, or at least, a well-grounded suspicion of hostile intentions, and in this case, conquest becomes only the means of self-defence. Secondly, along with personal ambition, there may be the wish to benefit one's native country by extending its sway ; or the people themselves may be urgent for war ; or it may even be thought necessary to maintain peace at home ; or

there may be some supposed right of dominion over the neighbouring state; or, lastly, there may be a wish not only to conquer, but also to civilize surrounding tribes, and improve their form of government. To propagate their ideas and institutions by war, was a favourite object, or at least, a pretext with the French republicans. Now what may be the predominating motive in the breast of the conqueror, no one can tell for certain, and, therefore, it is always possible that he may be moved by some of those views which are not altogether unjustifiable. For this reason, conquest, however destructive, does not prove so bad a disposition in the conqueror as many other acts, of which the immediate evil consequences are comparatively very limited.

But, the reasonableness of the common sentiment which condemns the ordinary criminal much more than the rebel or the conqueror will fully appear, if we trace the consequences, ultimate as well as immediate. In the first place, the evils of insurrection and of war are not always without compensation; for the former is sometimes necessary to overthrow a tyrannical government, and introduce a new and better order of things, as a storm is required to agitate and purify the atmosphere. Though the thunderbolt blasts where it strikes, the rest of nature is invigorated and refreshed. Even foreign war, destructive as it is in itself, *may* ultimately lead to good. Thus the Romans did not merely subdue, but they did also civilize and finally pacify many countries, which previously were sunk in barbarism or torn by inward convulsions; and by maintaining universal peace they favoured

universal prosperity. Though England cannot be justified for first attacking India, yet it must be allowed that the British sway is on the whole a blessing to that country, for it tends to civilize the people, puts a stop to many horrid practices, and prevents wars between the native princes.<sup>15</sup>

Secondly, however destructive rebellion and foreign war may be, they are, from the nature of things, partial and occasional evils, as compared with ordinary crimes, were these not prevented by morals and legislation. It is seldom that rebellion offers sufficient chances of success to induce any one to run the great risk that attends it, and when there are fair chances of success, the probability is that there is some good reason for resistance. In like manner, the spirit of conquest is checked by fear of effectual opposition on the part not only of the country menaced, but also of its neighbours, who, thinking themselves endangered, may make common cause with the invaded, and drive the invaders back upon their own territory. Thus Napoleon, after having over-run Europe, was doomed to see France conquered in its turn, and the standards of the Allies planted in the streets of Paris. The risk then as well as the difficulty attending conquest and rebellion are too great to allow of either becoming a frequent occurrence. But if ordinary crimes against person and property were not prevented by moral sentiment and by law, they would be committed in all places and at all

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<sup>15</sup> The abominable society of the *Thugs*, for instance, was suppressed by the British Government.

times, for the temptation to them is perpetual and the perpetration easy. The only check to them is morality and law, whereas political offences are prevented by utter impossibility or the fear of effectual opposition.

Since, then, from the nature of the case, political offences and political aggression cannot be of very frequent occurrence, it is reasonable that moral sentiment should be most strongly directed against other crimes, which but for that sentiment would become frequent every where, and by this frequency would produce an amount of ill incomparably greater than the partial and passing evils of rebellion and war, terrible though they be. In short, the disposition evinced by the ordinary criminal is far more dangerous to society, and to private happiness, than that of the political agitator or the ambitious warrior; for were the first to become common, it would reduce mankind to solitude and barbarism, and if not branded with ignominy, it would become common. Therefore, here, the general sentiments of mankind are in perfect agreement with the most far-sighted views of utility. Wars and revolutions may be compared to earthquakes or eruptions, which overthrow in a day a flourishing city or bury it under heaps of cinders, but are rare and partial visitors; while vulgar crimes are like the common fevers of every country, which work more slowly, but incessantly spread their ravages.

## CHAPTER V.

## ON THE MOTIVES TO THE PRACTICE OF VIRTUE.

THE only question that now remains to be discussed, in order to complete our system of Ethics, is, what are the motives to practice, which may be drawn from the foregoing theory of moral sentiment, and from the nature of virtue as here described.

If the above principles be correct, no doubt can be entertained whether it be for our interest to practise the self-regarding virtues ; for unless they conduced to our real interest, they neither would, nor ought to, have been called virtues. A tendency to the ultimate good of the individual is one of their essential characters, and without it they would never have been approved, nor ought to have been approved by mankind. All virtue, as we have seen, supposes a sacrifice, but sacrifice without a compensation is contrary to reason ; and, therefore, if the sacrifice be required by the moral sentiment of men in general, we may infer that it is followed by a due compensation, unless we maintain that men, in all countries, and in all ages, have on this point been irrational. So far as the self-regarding virtues are concerned, this general consideration might suffice ; but at the same time, it may be more satisfactory to show how they affect our happiness.



Having already dwelt upon the particular good effects of prudence or discretion, temperance, fortitude, and courage, we shall not here dilate upon these, but shall observe only that they are sufficiently striking to warrant the encouraging maxim, that "conduct is fate." What we shall now consider, is rather the joint influence of all these qualities, as tending to produce that greatest of human blessings, a healthy state of mind, free from eating cares and anxieties, from groundless fears, from despondency and imaginary ailments, and, lastly, from satiety. What are all the gifts of fortune, all the advantages of station, all bodily perfections, or even intellectual endowments, to one whose mind is not prepared for enjoyment? and without the above virtues, how can it be so prepared? Though the exercise of those virtues were itself unaccompanied with pleasure, they would still be necessary to ward off pain, to nurse our natural sensibility to innumerable delights, and prevent it being blunted prematurely. Of the two great causes which tend to destroy our sensibility to enjoyment, anxiety and satiety, the one arises from want of prudence or want of courage, the other from want of temperance. The man who lives beyond his income, or he who addicts himself to gambling or other hazardous speculations, is kept in a state of anxiety from want of prudence; another, as the miser, is anxious in the midst of riches from want of courage; while a third, from over-indulgence, becomes insensible to pleasure. To persons such as these, even the happy valley of Abyssinia could have no charms, for their minds are too absorbed with

care, or too satiated by excess, to allow them to mark or feel the beauty that everywhere surrounds them.

It has often been said, but cannot be too often repeated, that there is no such source of enjoyment as an innocent, pure, and simple mind, ready to enter into every passing amusement, and to cull every flower, however humble, that may strew the path of life. How mistaken the notion that happiness consists in fuss, splendour, and noise, and in splendid rather than in cheap recreations! but how much greater is the delusion, that the transitory delirium of intemperance can compensate the loss of innocence and simplicity of mind, which are necessary to give relish to all natural enjoyments! Take, for instance, the pleasure to be derived from the contemplation of nature in all its various forms. Can we conceive any source of gratification more accessible, more permanent, more free from immediate pain or ultimate evil? Wherever men are brought together, whether for business or pleasure, there is always the possibility of something disagreeable, from the clashing of opinions or interests, the difference of tastes, the varieties of humour, or simply the contrast of position. Since inequality must always exist, there will always be inferiors who may feel disagreeably humbled in the presence of their superiors. But in the presence of nature, we are free from all these causes of annoyance, for she has neither opinions nor interests, tastes nor whims, pride nor affectation. She is indeed a loving mother, for she calls upon all her children to come and drain her treasures and be satisfied, treasures that contain no alloy, and require

neither bolt nor bar, which are gathered without present pain, and enjoyed without future sorrow.

Oh Nature ! a' thy shows and forms  
To feeling, pensive hearts hae charms,  
Whether the kindly summer warms  
With life and light ;  
Or winter howls in dusky storms  
The lang, dark night.<sup>1</sup>

But rarely are the votaries of intemperance susceptible of pleasures such as these. As well might we suppose that a palate long used to high dressed dishes should relish simple fare, as that a mind given up to dissipation should feel the charms of nature, and conceive the luxury of contemplation. As the frequent use of Cayenne pepper makes all food seem insipid without it, and as constant novel reading indisposes the mind for more wholesome nourishment, so frequent riot and revelry deaden the zest for innocent recreations. Nay, the libertine and voluptuary, though decayed in mind and body, and little able to enjoy even what alone he prizes, is apt to despise that which he cannot relish, and to exclaim in the blindness of his heart,

“ Oh Mirth and Innocence ! oh milk and water ! ”<sup>2</sup>

Fool, whose folly is the result of his insensibility ! If the writer who penned that line were in earnest when he wrote it, we need ask no further proof of his unhappiness. Though endowed by nature with the most brilliant talents, and the most lively sensibility,

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<sup>1</sup> Burns.

<sup>2</sup> Don Juan.

he seems soon to have exhausted almost every species of enjoyment, for he was given to excess, and had no one to guide him, being left at an early age

“ Lord of himself, that heritage of woe ! ”

With respect to the social virtues, justice and benevolence, they differ from the self-regarding in this, that their invariable tendency to the good of the individual is not necessarily implied in their very nature. Though they neither would, nor ought to have been esteemed virtues, unless they were conducive on the whole to the good of mankind, yet it is conceivable that they may be occasionally opposed to private interest. Such a supposition must be allowed to involve no contradiction ; though in practice the occasions of such discrepancy will be found much fewer than might at first be imagined. It is certain that men do often act as if the two interests were opposed, and in law we must go upon that supposition, but were men sufficiently clear-sighted to perceive their real interest, and had they always sufficient force of character to practise what they know, they would rarely if ever seek to benefit themselves at the expense of others.

In regard to justice, it has long been a maxim that honesty is the best policy, and if we consider the nature of men, we shall be satisfied that the maxim is true. For one man that makes a fortune by dishonest practices, we may rest assured that there are ninety and nine who fail. The great error of the dishonest is this, that they think themselves wiser, or at least, act as if they thought themselves wiser,

than all with whom they have to do. They forget that men in general are by no means inattentive to their interests, and that persons, on other occasions, dull and narrow-minded, are here sufficiently alive. How short-sighted is a line of conduct which can prosper only if people in general were foolish, or indifferent! From the well-known eagerness of men about their own affairs, dishonesty is almost sure to be detected, and followed by disgrace and shame, desertion and ruin, if not by legal punishment.

Besides, even while undiscovered, there must be a constant dread of discovery, and what sort of life is that which is passed in continual alarm? Suppose knavery undetected and finally triumphant, would such triumph compensate for a long life of previous anxiety? Palpable success may be great, outward appearances may be splendid, but who but the giddy and superficial are deceived by these? Let us look to the mind within, and then let us say whether a life of fear can be balanced by the gifts of fortune, or all the outward advantages which the wide world can bestow.

In some cases, the period of triumph is the period of the greatest anxiety, for a high estate, though gained, may still be lost. Such, in particular, is the fate of those who by violence and injustice have risen to supreme power. Read the intimate history, as far as known, of the most celebrated tyrants of ancient and modern times, and then say whether they were happy. When we know that men, naturally of the greatest courage, came at last to tremble at a shadow, we must confess that vice is inseparably connected

with punishment ; for if that punishment do not follow from private vengeance or public justice, it is sure to flow from the terrors which haunt the guilty.

Though all virtue supposes some present sacrifice, yet, in the case of the self-regarding virtues, the sacrifice tends directly to the good of self, in that of the benevolent to the good of others, it would seem that benevolence is more opposed to private gratification than any of the virtues which look to self. And so indeed it appears to be ; for otherwise why should active benevolence require so much greater an effort than the practice of prudence or temperance ? though it may be that the opposition is more apparent than real, more at first than afterwards. When I give away to a needy man a sum of money, which I might have spent for my own gratification, it is certain in the first instance that I sacrifice something, and it does not immediately appear what compensation I can expect ; but when I refrain from spending in order to accumulate for a future day, I hope to profit hereafter by my riches. If then a man do not happen to be naturally benevolent, what motives can we bring to induce him to cultivate such a disposition ? If we cannot prove to him that benevolence is really for his interest ; he may laugh at all we say. We maintain then, in spite of first appearances, that benevolence in some shape or other is absolutely essential to happiness, for benevolence includes not only charity or love of our fellow-creatures in general, but love of country, as well as the private feelings of love, friendship, and family affection. How important these last are to happiness we have already

seen in the first book of this inquiry, as also how important to the happiness of the individual is a general love for mankind. Indeed we found that general benevolence has in some respects great advantages over any private attachment, for it cannot be bereaved of its object, and is free from private differences and jealousies, as well as from painful separations. Since life without desire is a dull routine, the only question is, which desire is best ; and if general benevolence were stronger, we could not hesitate about an answer. Considered as a ruling propensity to animate and fill up existence, its only drawback is weakness ; but add strength, and it becomes all that we could wish. What if it render us less rich or less powerful ? Can we hope to secure every advantage ? to possess untold wealth, and enjoy at the same time the luxury of imparting it to others ? Will any one pretend to say that the pleasure of doing good is not great, or that it is not free from the anxieties which attend ambition and covetousness ? And, to give interest and happiness to life, what is wanting but a desire without fear, a desire rising into a passion ? To foster general benevolence ought therefore to be our object, if we wish for our own happiness ; and though we succeed but partially, we shall not have laboured in vain.

Whatever part we may attribute to fortune in the affairs of this life, and whatever may be the occasional successes of the wicked, the practice of virtue is accompanied by one certain and permanent good, the practice of vice by one certain and permanent evil ; for in the one case we are self-approved, in the other

we are self-condemned. Amidst the manifold uncertainties of our temporal lot, it is a grand thing to have some secure hold to which we may repair in time of need ; some port of safety where we may lie at ease while the tempest howls around us. Hence the importance of wealth in the eyes of men ; for the rich, it would seem, are free from that painful feeling of insecurity which crushes the poor. But wealth is amassed with difficulty, and easily lost, and the possession of it is not always attended with the expected pleasure, for a spirit to enjoy may be wanting, and therefore it is neither a certain refuge, nor of necessity a pleasant one. If then there be a good always in our own power, and to be lost only by our own fault, which is obtained without excessive labour, and is preserved without anxiety, which whether in prosperity or adversity, in wealth or poverty, is a never-failing consolation, ought not this to be prized above all others. Such is the pleasure that waits upon a good conscience. And if there be an evil that always follows certain actions, however pleasant at the time, or apparently useful in their results, which clings to them in fact as the shadow does to the substance, which aggravates disappointment, and even poisons success, ought not this to be shunned as the greatest of human calamities ? Such is the pain of remorse.

“ So do the dark in soul expire,  
Or live like scorpion girt by fire ;  
So writhes the mind remorse bath riven,  
Unfit for earth, undoom'd for heaven.” <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Giaour.



Moreover, the approbation of self is enhanced by that of others. Though men may be dazzled and even their moral sentiments perverted, by splendour and success, yet, on the whole the public is a fair judge, and in general awards praise and blame nearly as they are merited. What men approve or disapprove in themselves, they also approve or disapprove in others, so that if private conscience be a good monitor, public must be so likewise. And though the latter may not be so well informed, yet in point of impartiality it has the decided advantage, for individuals are prone to self-delusion. The good man may therefore rest assured that his merits will be acknowledged, in most cases immediately, but at all events ultimately, for party spirit will at last die away, and complicated or suspicious circumstances will at length be cleared up. For the same reason, the demerits of the bad will certainly be denounced, generally at first, but always in the end. And what is life without the esteem of our fellows? If a man have a spark of sensibility he must be lowered to the dust under the weight of public obloquy, and if he have not, then is his condition worse, for in that case he must be lost to all improvement, and even to all enjoyments, except the pleasures of sense. How wretched the lot of the vicious, who can escape from the torments of remorse and shame, only by searing and deadening their minds to every delight! And how blest the portion of the virtuous, whose inward and healthful sensibility is roused by applauding voices on every side!

In addition to the pleasures of reputation, a good

name is essential to advancement in any pursuit, and the fame of signal virtue creates such respect and confidence in all men, as are not only highly gratifying, but almost insure success. And be it well noted for the honour of human nature, and for the encouragement of the good, that no superiority excites so little envy as superior virtue. This fact is a signal proof of the general moral nature, and particularly the justice of men, where their own passions and interests are not concerned. The unrivalled superiority of Cato was never an object of envy, but the superiority of Cæsar was a principal cause of his death ; for the envy of some, and the patriotism of others, nerved the arms that struck the fatal blow.

Were it possible that vice might on some rare occasions be for our private advantage, there is still one argument which ought to decide us against it. This is the danger of breaking the habit of virtue. A first offence always costs the greatest struggle, so that if once we give way, how can we be sure that we shall not offend again, or rather, how can we doubt but that we shall repeat the fault ? If, when virtuous habits were entire, we could not resist temptation, can we hope to be firmer when they are broken ? Let us remember, that the motives for resistance will no longer be the same, for, the sense of innocence, and the sense of security, when once lost, cannot be recalled.

When we consider the many and certain advantages of virtue, and the many and certain disadvantages of vice, even when apparently triumphant, we cannot but wonder how men can be so stupid as to

prefer the one to the other. Since, on the one hand, we find a great, sure, and permanent good, with a small, uncertain, or temporary evil ; on the other, a great, sure, and permanent evil, with a small, uncertain, or temporary good ; how comes it that men can hesitate between them, or even embrace the latter ? That they often do so is certain ; but how shall we account for the fact ? The fact may be accounted for by one or other of these two general causes, ignorance, or the violence of present temptation. Men may not be aware of all the evil consequences of what they are doing, or they may brave them from a wish to enjoy the present. The future is comparatively distant, and apparently, at least, uncertain, and, therefore, it cannot so inflame the passions as that which is near and sure, even though our reason were in general well-informed as to consequences. Passion acts on the imagination, and both together fill the mind and prevent those conceptions of future evil which are necessary to the exercise of reason, for without conceptions, reason can do nothing. In short, violent passion may so occupy the mind as to render reason impossible, however accurate it be on other occasions.

The existence of vice, and the two causes of its existence, are facts utterly opposed to the opinion of those philosophers who consider that men always act according to their apparent, if not to their real interest, and, but for ignorance, that they would always pursue the latter. Since vice is certainly contrary to our real interest, those who maintain the above opinion must allow that the clearer the intellect, the

better must be the moral character, and if knowledge continually increase, that vice may become extinct, a conclusion sufficiently startling. But, if the view here given be correct, knowledge alone cannot expel vice, or induce men to pursue their real interest, unless it be shown that knowledge destroys all inordinate passion, and renders the present no more exciting than the future. This result may be brought about by a course of moral discipline, cherishing force of mind, but not by mere instruction, which informs the head but does not create habits.

Far from always pursuing their real interest, men do not always follow that which is apparent and palpable; for, at least, the word interest implies that men never act but after some consideration or calculation, whether sound or otherwise. But we know that this is not the case, for all of us, at times, are creatures of impulse. Resentment, for instance, often causes men to act not only without reflection, but totally in opposition to what their calm reason would dictate. Here, injury to others, not the good of self, is the direct object in view. Even where the desire is self-regarding, it may be so violent as to preclude reflection. Thus love of glory blinded the French to all the evils which Napoleon brought upon their country. So that the above opinion, when thoroughly sifted, is either false, or else can mean nothing more than that men always act from a desire of something, a statement true but trivial.

Hitherto we have considered virtue and vice solely in reference to temporal happiness or misery, and we have found that even in this life, the advantage, be-

yond all comparison, lies on the side of virtue. But when we look to a future state, and the rewards and punishments there held out to us, how paltry, how insignificant, appear the triumphs of vice, how lamentably blind its votaries ! If the motives to the practice of virtue drawn from temporal considerations were less strong than they are, and were it in this life merely on a par with vice, who that has any foresight ought to hesitate between them ? If virtue be not rewarded here, it assuredly will hereafter, and if vice be not punished in this life, certainly it will in another. Some may doubt the natural justice of men, others may dread the misrepresentations of enemies, the luke-warmness of friends, or the indifference of the multitude, but none can question the wisdom and justice of God. Not only is future happiness held out as the reward of virtue, but virtue is an essential qualification for partaking of that reward. If the vicious cannot here relish the exalted pleasures of pure benevolence, of friendship and of love, how shall they share in the spiritual joys of heaven ? To feel those joys, the mind must be prepared by moral discipline on earth, by cultivating love of our neighbour and piety to God, in a word, by Virtue and Religion.

Let us then strive so to pass through this state of probation, as to come out at last like silver purified by fire ; for as the metal purged of its dross is sublimed by the chemist's furnace, so the spirit without its clay shall rise to immortal life.

## NOTES TO BOOK II.

NOTE (A') p. 443.

THAT Caligula, Nero, and other such Emperors, should have encouraged gladiatorial combats might not excite our surprise; but what must we think when we consider that they were patronised by the very best of Princes, by the "delight of the human race," the amiable Titus, and the no less admirable Trajan? We are told that Titus, at the opening of the Colosseum, "exhibited gladiatorial shows during a hundred days: and five thousand wild beasts, together with some thousands of gladiators, are said to have been sacrificed on this occasion." Trajan gave a spectacle to the people during a hundred and twenty-three days, when ten thousand gladiators appeared in the arena. Do not these and similar facts prove a very general and glaring perversion of moral sentiment? for where should we look for a standard of morality if not in Titus and Trajan?

Gladiatorial combats were first introduced at the funerals of remarkable men, and they arose, no doubt, out of a more ancient practice, that of immolating human beings to the shades of the departed. Thus Virgil represents Æneas as sacrificing eight youths on the funeral pile of Pallas:

Sulmone creatos

Quattuor hinc juvenes, totidem quos educat Ufens,  
Viventes rapit: inferias quos immolet umbris,  
Captivoque rogi perfundat sanguine flammæ.

Æn. x. 517.

This practice was too inhuman to subsist in a more enlightened age; but instead of it, gladiatorial shows were introduced in honour of the deceased, and these were afterwards exhibited on other occasions; and what began in superstition was continued for mere sport, and sanctioned by long custom. It is to the progress of Christianity, and the courage of a poor monk (Telemachus), that we owe the abolition of these sanguinary amusements.

NOTE (B<sup>1</sup>) p. 454.

The act of Timoleon must have been considered an extreme one even by the ancients; and indeed Plutarch informs us that on the spot opinions were divided upon it, though, at the same time he asserts that the majority of worthy citizens approved the deed. Timoleon himself, however, was not without his scruples, and when to these were added the execrations of his mother, he was driven to such a state of despondency, that for twenty years he kept aloof from public affairs; and nothing short of the hope of upsetting another tyrant could rouse him from his dejection. The case must be considered a very instructive one, as showing what different views of duty may be taken by the most enlightened and virtuous mind.

NOTE (C<sup>1</sup>) p. 478.

The following passage from De Lolme on the English Constitution, is quoted in the Preface to Junius's Letters.

“In short, whoever considers what it is that constitutes the moving principle of what we call great affairs, and the invincible sensibility of man to the opinion of his fellow-creatures, will not hesitate to affirm, that if it were possible for the liberty of the press to exist in a despotic government, and (what is not less difficult,) for it to exist without changing the constitution, this liberty of the press would alone form a counterpoise to the power of the prince. If, for example, in an empire of the East, a sanctuary could be found, which, rendered respectable by the ancient religion of the people, might insure safety to those who should bring thither their observations of any kind; and that from thence, printed papers should issue, which under a certain seal might be equally respected; and which, in their daily appearance, should examine and freely discuss the conduct of the cadis, the bashaws, the vizier, the divan, and the sultan himself; that would introduce immediately some degree of liberty.”

FINIS.